

Return to Rice: FAQ

Will students return to Rice for in-person learning this fall?

Yes, as conditions permit, registered Rice students will attend classes four days a week starting September 1. In-person instruction will occur Mondays and Tuesdays and Thursdays and Fridays. Students will work from home on Wednesdays. This decision was made based on our size and the availability of necessary resources.

What schedule will students follow once they return to school?

To minimize exposure and time spent changing classes, students will attend four classes per day on a 80-minute block schedule. Students may arrive on campus as early as 7am and after the requisite temperature check and health questionnaire, proceed to their first class which will begin at 8:20am. Dismissal will be at 2:30pm. Students NOT participating in an after school activity must be picked up no later than 3pm.

How will faculty utilize an 80-minute block of teaching time?

Lesson plans need to be 'chunked' into segments of time of between 20-30 minutes duration. Each segment has a purpose including goal-setting, context/background knowledge, application/practice, and conclusion/bridge to subsequent lessons. Lecture could be one segment of a block schedule lesson plan, however, it should never be used for an entire block of time. Properly planned, a block schedule allows for sustained instruction which promotes in-depth critical thinking around big ideas and essential questions.

How will Remote Wednesdays be structured?

Students will be encouraged to use this time at home to get caught up on homework, take advantage of Guidance and enrichment resources, meet one-on-one virtually with teachers, and participate in club activities. There will be no scheduled classes on Wednesdays.

How is Rice addressing recommended social distancing measures?

Whenever possible, classroom desks will be spaced 6-feet apart and face forward. Classroom floors will be marked to maintain social distancing and seats will be assigned. Most classrooms can fit up to 16 students 6-feet apart. When more room is needed, students may have class in a larger room in our building. Ten of these rooms including the gym, cafeteria, library and music room, have been identified. In addition, a comprehensive traffic flow plan has been developed to ensure all students travel in the same direction when moving in the building.

Will masks be required?

Per Governor Scott's August 1 mandate, all Vermonters over the age of 2 are required to wear masks when in public and when 6-feet of social distancing is not attainable. Rice requires that all students, faculty, staff and visitors must wear masks at all times in our building. Exceptions for health-related or behavioral-related circumstances will be accommodated and must be accompanied by a note from a physician. Students may wear any appropriate mask of their choosing.

Will lunch be served at school?

To-go style lunch will be provided by the Abbey Group on a daily basis. Only students wishing to purchase a school lunch may go to the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period. Once they've purchased their lunch, they must return to their assigned "lunch room" to eat it.

Will Mass be offered at school?

We are working with Fr. Joe Sanderson and the Diocese to determine the safest way to keep this important part of our school mission present. More than likely, we will offer Mass with social distancing measures in place, to small groups in our gym while remaining students watch it via Zoom in their classrooms. Communion will be distributed to all no matter their location in the building.

Will students be able to leave their classrooms for any reason?

Trips to the restroom, front office and Guidance will be closely monitored. For contact tracing purposes, students must sign out to visit the restroom. In addition, students will only be allowed to leave their classrooms in an emergency or for pre-arranged appointments.

What kinds of academic and emotional support will be available for my student?

School counselors will be available by email, phone, Zoom, and at times, in person for regular check-ins. Rice Counselors are here to support students emotionally, socially and academically. During this time, it is more important than ever to use mental health support systems like the Rice Guidance department. To set up an appointment with your Guidance Counselor, please contact them via email or phone at any time.

Will extracurricular activities (athletics and afterschool clubs) continue to be offered?

On August 7, the State and Vermont Principals Association confirmed that a Fall 2020 sports season will happen. The particulars are being ironed out, but most likely,

practices will be phased in with the less contact sports to begin first. That would mean golf and cross country would be the first to have competitions, followed by field hockey and volleyball and then soccer and football. Other extracurriculars will continue as long as social distancing protocols can be maintained.

What kind of cleaning regimen will be implemented to mitigate the spread of germs?

Bathrooms and high touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected several times a day. In addition, we will use electrostatic foggers on Wednesdays when our building is empty of students and faculty. Finally, disinfecting wipes, spray and paper towels will be readily available in all classrooms for use before the start and at the conclusion of every class. With permission from their parents and proper training, students will be recruited to help with this process.

How will families be notified if their student, a classmate or faculty member is sick?

Anyone self-reporting COVID symptoms during the school day will be immediately moved to our isolation room. Parents will be asked to pick up their sick student as soon as possible. If a case of COVID is confirmed, we will notify the entire school community and the Department of Health. If your student has potentially been exposed, you will receive a phone call from contact tracers at the Department of Health and based on the circumstances, provided necessary guidance on next steps.

Will my child have to quarantine if they've been exposed to a classmates or faculty member with COVID?

Given the number of variables to consider, any instances of COVID exposure will be evaluated on a case by case basis and guided by the Vermont Department of Health.

What will happen if we see a resurgence of COVID cases?

Rice has a three-tier plan that addresses the potential of a resurgence of COVID cases:

- Plan A: In-Person Instruction 4 days/week starting September 8
- Plan B: Hybrid Instruction with half of students in-person and half Zooming synchronously from home - 2 days in person; 2 days at home. All students and faculty at home on Wednesdays.
- Plan C: Remote Learning

Without lockers, will students be expected to carry all of their belongings, including outerwear?

Locker usage will not be permitted to cut down on congregating in our hallways. Students will need to carry their things with them throughout the day. We are encouraging our teachers to use as many digital resources as possible to cut down on

high-touch surfaces and minimize the load students must carry throughout the day. The four-block day (versus 6-7 periods) should also cut down on the book load. Finally, students may hang their coats on the backs of their chairs when they aren't being worn.