

## Arapahoe Students' Thoughts on Social Distancing Measures

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When much of the country was still shut down because of COVID-19, the Arapahoe community knew the school year would look significantly different once we went back; but as the second week of hybrid learning is coming to an end, what has it really looked like? In an effort to curb exposure for both students and staff, LPS has implemented a part online, part in class system where students go to school twice a week with three days for independent work and class meetings over Google Meet. While in person at Arapahoe, students and staff must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

In multiple polls on the Warrior Media Instagram story from August 27th to August 28th, Arapahoe students expressed their opinions on hybrid learning and the school's social distancing measures.

At school, students and staff are expected to follow social distancing rules such as wearing a mask and staying at a proper distance from others. In the hallways, in order to minimize two way traffic and decrease the amount of people in an area, there are arrows showing the way to go, and in the classroom, seats are spaced out so that students don't come into contact.

A poll on the Warrior Media Instagram asked students if they feel the proper precautions are being taken by both students and staff to keep our school healthy. Out of 337 students polled on the Warrior Media Instagram, 77% said yes and 23% said no.

Dozens of district and school administrators spent months working with experts and administrators from other districts to figure out the best course of action for the new school year. With large changes to Arapahoe and the community as a whole, many students have thoughts and opinions on the new normal. "It's really confusing but I'm just glad we get to go to school in person at all," Hannah Adler, 11, said about the hybrid schedule. Many schools around the country, and even in Colorado, went back to school this year with fully online learning. Although the national consensus is that schools will be online within months, it's a welcomed opportunity to be able to attend in person classes while possible.

There are some negative aspects to the hybrid learning schedule. On the Warrior Media Instagram, students were asked what they think is the worst part about hybrid learning. "Only being able to go to school twice a week," River Corless, 12, said. Because each in person day has only four class periods, students see each teacher once a week. While class periods have been extended to 90 minutes to allow for more instruction, this still puts many students at a disadvantage.

On Wednesdays, teachers hold Google Meet classes, and students have all eight periods in one day, each meeting lasting about 35 minutes. Naomi Navarro, 10, said, “Having to sit through almost 7 hours of [Google Meet] calls on Wednesdays.” It can be difficult for most students to focus on school for that long without leaving the room, even though the virtual class day is essential for proper instruction time. Many other students expressed the challenges they face with getting onto online calls on time and that online school generally is difficult for them.

Not everything about the hybrid learning model is negative though, as many students welcome the changes. “I’ve enjoyed getting days to work on my homework,” Chris Kahler, 11, said about hybrid learning. If a student has in person classes on Monday and Thursday, they then have Tuesday and Friday to independently work and study. This allows for a less rushed, stressful school week. Students stated that this schedule is much more flexible than what LPS has had in the past before COVID-19.

In our poll on the Warrior Media Instagram, we asked students if they are happy to be back at school. Out of 360 students, 79% said yes and 21% said no. Although there are mixed opinions throughout the Arapahoe community, most people understand why schools can’t go back to full in person classes. The more strictly students and staff follow social distancing guidelines, the sooner the country and Arapahoe High School can return to normal.