

# THIS IS OUR NEW NORM

## Protocol changes require flexibility.

By Tara Donelson and Kyra Henson

Students are used to returning to school. They're used to finding their bestie in the drop off zone and walking into school together, looking forward to eating lunch in the cafeteria, struggling with lockers, and rushing to class through crowded hallways. This year, it was different.

"I've really never missed going to school or cared 'til now that I don't get to see my friends as much and just [miss] that in-person interaction," Isaiah Tafoya (8) said. Students and teachers alike were itching to return, but as robotics teacher Harmony Jones put it, it was clear that, "this is going to be an adventure."

The first two weeks were spent in full remote instruction. Zoom, newly used to navigate classes, proved to be both a blessing and a curse. "My strongest memory from our first day of school is trying over and over again to get into advise," recalled Maisy Shull (8).

Finally, Drake's doors opened on September 8th. So much was the same -

picking that first day outfit and the excitement of seeing friends- but it was also very different. "The strangest part of coming back to school was wearing masks and social distancing and [temperature] screenings," Cianna Immel (7) said. "It is so weird having to take our backpacks everywhere instead of using lockers," Carolyn Dominguez (6) said.

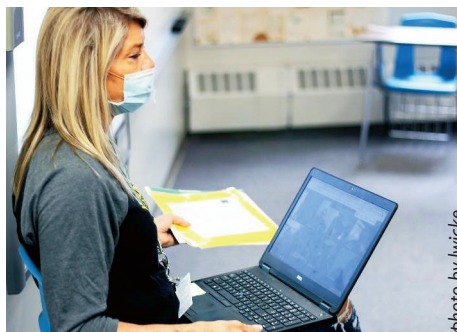
There were a hundred little adjustments every day, from how to safely share supplies to how to check out books. "I remember walking down the eighth grade hall and thinking that it was so weird to be spending my eighth grade year this way since this is not how I pictured it," said Lilly Gustafson (8).

Another major hurdle was the new hybrid schedule that reduced the number of people in the building. Based on last names, students attended school in person two days a week. The rest was done online. Noting the drawbacks, Emma Levy (8) said, "I think there are some things I miss such as seeing my A-K last named friends." Then, after a moment's thought, she added, "However, if this is what is needed to keep us safe, then I'm 100% ok with it!"



### WORKING LUNCH

On the first day students were on campus, they had to eat inside due to an early snow storm. With 90 minute block classes, outside lunch had been the plan. But like the rest of 2020, admin was forced to pivot at the last minute. Students were asked to eat inside and remain at their desks. "It wasn't so bad because I was sitting next to my new friend," said Reese Barry (6).



**NEW GROOVE!** Teacher Susan Murnan adapts to new hybrid online teaching. Despite having half of her students online, Murnan said, "Just being in the classroom again with the energy and personalities of my kiddos was a relief." **A NEW ZOOM!** Hudson Oliver (7) rides his new electric scooter to school on the first day. "It's too cold [in winter] but it's still very fun to ride," said Oliver.





**IT'S JUST TEMP-ORARY.** Brianna Brewster (7) gets her temperature taken as she arrives. About the first day she said, "I loved getting to meet my new friends and my teachers."  
**PANDEMIC PICS.** Andrew Dries (8) and Camden Crouch (8) wait to get their school pictures taken. Students waited in socially distanced lines that stretched down the hall. "I'm learning how to do a new normal in middle school," Dries said.



photo by Iwicke

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**MR. CLEAN.** Lincoln Wicke (6) makes a change to his usual routine by hand sanitizing on the way into school. This new rule was part of the COVID-19 protocols that were instituted. "I wasn't too nervous about the COVID-19 stuff as much as I was nervous about starting at a new school," Wicke said. **PASSING TIME!** Orville Willis (7) waits for desks to dry after sanitizing between classes in Mr. Conway's social studies class. The wait was usually five minutes. "It felt good to know that they were being cleaned, because I don't want to get COVID," said Willis.

# UNLUCKY STARTS

Newbies share first day mishaps.



"On my first day in the building, I was walking down the hallway and tripped right in the middle of the hallway."

-Nolan Shidmantle (6)



"The night before our first day of school, I was getting a bowl for cereal, and my sister didn't see me, so she slammed the cabinet door on my head."

-Ben Blair (6)



"Someone told me to look for the clean carpet when I was trying to find Mrs. Wicke's class. I didn't know what 'clean carpet' meant. I thought all the carpets were clean, so I didn't know where the classroom was."

-Blake Anderson (6)