

March 20, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Caregivers,

The Marlborough Public Schools highest priority is to support families and students during this extended closure, which is currently from March 16, 2020 to April 6, 2020. Facing a pandemic is requiring our educational community to rethink how we support our students when school is not in session.

The Student Support Services team is working to provide some clarity and resources for families during this time. Information and guidance from local, state and federal authorities have resulted in decisions and actions that need to be flexible and equitable for all students. We have received guidance from OSEP (Office of Special Education Programming) regarding the provision of services and instruction for students with disabilities who are on IEPs and 504 Plans.

Currently, the following district guidelines are in effect:

- **New Referrals and Initial Eligibility**
 - In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) guidelines, the Marlborough Public Schools, along with most schools in the commonwealth, will freeze evaluation referrals for all students in a referral cycle during school closure. This means that as soon as schools open again, the timelines will commence as is required by state and federal regulations. All previously scheduled meetings will be rescheduled based on adjusted timelines.
- **Annual reviews, Re-evaluations and Transition/Progress/Clinic Meetings**
 - Any meetings that have already been scheduled during the period of time that the Marlborough Public Schools are closed will be rescheduled. We will attempt to schedule IEP meetings with families/guardians participating virtually or via phone. Once we reopen, school staff will be in touch with you to reschedule any IEP meetings that were not able to be held virtually or via phone. Timelines for compliance e.g., receipt of IEPs, testing consents, evaluation reports, progress reports, et cetera are on HOLD at this time except for any meeting held virtually or via phone.
- **IEP Services**
 - At this time based on guidance from DESE, during the period of time that school is not in session, classroom instruction and services will not be provided to students, including students on IEPs. Educational enrichment packets and/or access to Google Classroom was provided to all students in the MPS to help all of our students stay connected to their teachers during this time. It is not intended to replicate or replace day to day educational services. Liaisons will be reaching out to families to stay connected. If this guidance changes, we will inform parents.

- **Home/Hospital Tutoring**
 - The Marlborough Public Schools do not provide tutoring services when school is not in session.
- **Out-of-District Placements (day, residential, transportation)**
 - For students in out-of-district day or residential placements, the Marlborough Public Schools will follow the attendance recommendations of the individual school or facility. At this time, we will continue to transport students to their day placements if they continue to be open during closure. We recognize that some families may choose to keep their children home during this time even if their out-of-district day or residential placements is not closed.
- **Communication with Special Education Services Staff**
 - Special Education Services Staff will be reaching out to families in an effort to stay connected. The Marlborough Public Schools will be providing links and resources to alternative learning opportunities from liaisons and related service providers.

Informational Links:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-15-2020-school-closure-order/download>

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/qa-covid-19-03-12-2020.pdf>

We are in constant communication with our state and federal level agencies and the Marlborough Public Schools will communicate any updates and new information as it becomes available. As you are aware, this situation is ever-changing and your patience and understanding during these unprecedented times is greatly appreciated. We are here to support you. Please stay safe and healthy.

Respectfully,

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