

## **Westborough Public Schools**

Parent and Student Guidance Regarding Our Learning Community

Sustaining connections, engagement and learning during the closure of our schools.

Dear Families and Students,

We know that you have been patiently waiting for more district wide guidance about how we plan to proceed with an extended distance learning school experience. Delays by the state to provide definitive guidance has slowed our response time.

Because we learned yesterday the state has again delayed releasing their guidance, we have decided to move forward and share more details about our plans. PENDING final requirements by the state and federal government we will adjust if needed, but this is how we are working to provide the best learning we can in these circumstances.

I again want to commend our faculty for moving quickly to reach out to students to provide connection and relationship as well as routines for learning. TONIGHT AT 6:00pm on WestboroughTV the School Committee will be reviewing this planning as well as receiving an update on district operations during this time. Moving forward through the rest of this week we will continue to get these new systems into place. As usual, we welcome [your comments and questions](#) and will review them and address them as we provide routine updates.

Amber Bock, Superintendent of Schools  
and the Westborough Leadership Team

### **New Details on Extended Alternative Learning Days (ALD)**

All grade levels will be easing into this work over the next week to two weeks. Relationships and review work of familiar content will come first.

#### **Goals:**

- Maintain relationships and connections of our learning community.
- Minimize skill and learning regression.
- Connect students to meaningful intellectual engagement of content.
- Attain what progress we are able to facilitate with all students on the most essential learning.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

- New content can be covered.
- We expect ALL students to participate in learning made accessible to them.
- Principals, English Language Education Director, Director of Student Services, Curriculum and Special Education Coordinators will work with paraeducators and

specialists such as reading, English Language Learner teachers, Math Plus teachers, School Psychologists, guidance counselors, occupational, physical, and speech language therapists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and others to develop a service support plan for students.

- When possible live chats and virtual meetings will be provided to keep connections and a sense of community for all of us.
- We will do our best to make all information available for parents/caregivers in multiple languages.

#### Relationships & Communication:

- Be flexible. Students, families, and faculty are functioning under nonoptimal work and learning environments.
- We will make as much personal connection as we can, but teachers will also need time away from email and work to manage their own family needs.
  - Teachers will set clear guidelines and times regarding parent and student email and online availability. Please respect these.
- We all need to manage our expectations. Everyone has an individual mental picture of how this should be managed and it will take time to establish our best approaches.

#### Schedules and Workload:

- New assignments will be posted weekdays by 9:00 AM.
- We will cover a LOT less, so content and learning will focus on the essential. We anticipate covering about 50% of the content and learning that would normally be accomplished.
- Families are urged to set up schedules and routines with their children that are predictable. The district will send out a separate set of suggestions about how to build schedules and routines.
- Grades PK-6 students will be given assignments that can be done at any time during the day. The amount of time students will spend on assignments will range from 60 minutes at the PK/K, up to about 90 minutes at grades 1 / 2, and up to 120 minutes for grades 3 through 6.
- Grades 7-12 will be expected to work from 9:00-12:45 every day. There are blocks of time built into the schedule in the event a student cannot participate on a particular day
- Here are the schedules for Mill Pond, Gibbons, and WHS.
  - [Mill Pond](#)
  - [GMS 7th grade](#)
  - [GMS 8th grade](#)
  - [Westborough High School](#)

#### Grading, Feedback and Expectations:

- Teachers can and will provide feedback and grades to guide student learning. These grades will provide information for the following:

- Class placement guidelines to help make balanced classes K-8
- Course placement levels for 7-12
- Promotion to next grade based on participation
- The final closing grade average for this online time period will be a Pass/Fail

#### Report Cards:

- On current work up to 3/13.
- Report cards will be completed on all students for work up to 3/13.
- Grades for 3rd Quarter and 2nd Term will be released on April 9th.

#### Update on Special Education Guidance:

- The [United States Department of Education Guidance \(March 21, 2020\)](#) is guiding our response to addressing the needs of special education students.
  - The Federal Government has determined that some special education services are better than no special education services for students during this period of extended school closure.
  - This target provides flexibility for IEP services to be delivered to the best of our ability given the circumstances. It also allows us to provide consultation and support to families.
- State guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is still evolving. The DESE Special Education Commissioner is scheduled to provide another briefing to school districts tomorrow. The Westborough Public Schools will then make a determination as to whether further adjustments to district practice are warranted.
- [WPS Special Education Parent Guidance: COVID-19 School Closure \(3/25/20\)](#)

#### Student Privacy and Responsible Technology Use

- Student privacy
  - Students will be using commercial websites and online services (including mobile apps). These website and online services (including mobile apps) are carefully chosen to support specific learning goals and used solely for the benefit of our students and the school. Student use and account creation procedures will be directed and supervised by classroom teachers and other school staff members and will vary by service.
  - The Child Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) regulates “the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by operators of commercial websites and online services (including mobile apps) directed to children under 13 that collect, use, or disclose personal information from children, and operators of general audience websites or online services with actual knowledge that they are collecting, using, or disclosing personal information from children under 13.” Westborough Public Schools are bound to comply with all COPPA regulations.
  - When school districts “contract with third-party website operators to offer online programs solely for the benefit of their students and for the school

system,” COPPA allows schools to “act as the parent’s agent and can consent to the collection of kids’ information on the parent’s behalf. However, the school’s ability to consent for the parent is limited to the educational context — where an operator collects personal information from students for the use and benefit of the school, and for no other commercial purpose.”

- Some teachers have started using the Zoom video conferencing service with their students.
  - While we investigate the privacy implications of using the free Zoom service with students under 13, we ask that teachers, students, and parents refrain from providing personal identifying information when creating or joining a Zoom session.
- Video conferencing services allow teachers to record their sessions with students, and teachers may choose to so they can share it with their students to review on demand.
  - Just as teachers wouldn’t publicly share videos taken of students in person without permission, teachers will only share recorded video conferences with their students and colleagues if given permission by all participants.
  - Just as students would not publicly share videos taken of students and staff in person, students should not copy or share classroom recordings provided to them without their teacher’s permission.
- Staff privacy
  - Teachers and other staff expect students to seek permission before recording them in person and have the same expectation for video conferences.
- Student Responsible Use
  - Responsible use of technology by students is part of our curriculum at all grade levels and students are used to being expected to follow their school’s principles of responsible use.
  - Video conferencing guidelines for students are available at:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GgPFHNxi-WiRCK1Ny0-4rgVT5eDiPeZkaFUQTqELOn4/edit?usp=sharing>
  - Students or their guardians should contact their teacher if they have questions about how to practice these principles in an ALD setting.

Take care, more information will be forthcoming.

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and the Westborough Leadership Team