



Pembroke Public Schools

72 Pilgrim Road, Pembroke, MA 02359

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www.pembrokek12.org

Dear Families of Special Education students,

All Pembroke students will begin remote learning April 6, 2020 and continue through May 3, 2020. The district will also provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. The Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) recognizes that these unprecedented circumstances may affect how all educational and related services and supports are provided. While the United States Education Department (USED) and DESE will offer flexibility where possible, USED has emphasized many disability-related modifications and services may be effectively provided remotely or online.

In a remote learning environment, we may not be able to provide all services in the manner they are typically provided pursuant to students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The provision of FAPE may include, as appropriate, special education and related services provided remotely through resources and supports. This will be unique for each student based on their special education needs and IEP. Special education during remote learning will be provided by supporting students with strategies to access the general education curriculum, providing modified assignments, tutorials and/or modeling and regular ongoing support to students and families. Moreover, we will continue to implement many of the accommodations on a student's IEP, such as graphic organizers, use of speech-to-text and other assistive technology.

During this period of school closure, Pembroke Public Schools will make every effort to use creative strategies to provide special education instruction and services to the extent feasible. In addition, the educational opportunities offered to the general student population, including enrichment activities and resources that have been posted to our website since we closed on March 13th, have also been made accessible to students with disabilities. It is not necessary for the district to convene a student's IEP Team to provide changes to learning opportunities and services to students with disabilities during this period of extended school closure.

As remote learning is a new concept to Pembroke families, and students, it is important to note that regarding remote learning, parents will be agreeing to the following terms, "to the extent that this distance learning activity provides confidential student information, all participants agree, by participating in this distance learning activity, to refrain from disseminating any confidential student information about other student participants with any third parties. By participating in this distance learning experience, consent to this request is hereby provided". Additional information about expectations related to remote learning for all students will be shared by the district.

Once school resumes, as appropriate, individual teams will review how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to individual students and convene Special Education Teams as necessary in order to make an individualized determination as to how to address any concerns and to ensure the student receives FAPE prospectively.

Our Mission: To ensure student achievement through excellence in teaching and learning.



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Ongoing communication will also promote and sustain important connections between students and their teachers, a source of vital support and stability for students. Therefore, families can expect to be in regular communication with team chairs and service providers. Families will be contacted by special educators to discuss a student's special education remote learning plan during the closure.

Regarding special education team meetings, the district will do its best to conduct annual review meetings virtually during the closure period. Initial and reevaluation meetings, under most circumstances, will be rescheduled after the closure period. Team meetings will be conducted telephonically or virtually using technologies such as Google Meet. DESE recognizes that school closures may impact the ability of school districts to meet timelines. Our school teams will work with families to discuss timelines, changes to our practices regarding meeting invitations, meeting notes, and delivery of IEPs in order to do our best to have reasonable timelines for staff and families.

Parents will be given the options of virtual participation in annual review meetings, waiving their right to participate in a meeting and having the team administratively draft an IEP or postponing the team meeting until school resumes. Should a parent opt to conduct a virtual team meeting, the district will do its best to assure that all team members are able to participate. Formal communication regarding parents' rights and options will be sent to parents to document agreements. This way teams and families will have a clear understanding of expectations. During this closure, a student's current accepted IEP will remain in effect until a new IEP is developed and accepted, irrespective of the expired date reflected in the IEP forms. Parents will be contacted by team chairs to discuss the scheduling of annual review meetings that were or are to occur from March 13th through May 3rd.

Below is a link to the most up to date DESE information regarding Special Education: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/sped.html>

Should you have any questions regarding special education for your child during this closure, please contact your child's liaison or building based team chair.

Thank you in advance for your support and patience during this unprecedented time.

Jessica DeLorenzo

Director of Student Services