



Arthur Unobskey, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
508.358-3763

Parry Graham, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent  
508.358.3772

Richard Whitehead, M.Ed.  
Director of Student  
Services  
508.358.3756

Susan Bottan, MBA  
Director of Finance &  
Operations  
508.358.3750

Tony Laing, Ph.D.  
METCO Director  
508.358.3754

Leisha F. Simon, M.Ed.  
Director of Technology &  
Digital Learning  
508.358.3714

September 13, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians & Caregivers,

Tomorrow, we start offering limited in-person special education instruction to students. For the longest time, I had no idea when I would be able to write that sentence. The vast majority of special education students have not met in-person with their teachers for over one hundred and eighty days, which essentially is a full school year. As we left school on March 12, I don't think any of us would have predicted that. We have all worked together in the intervening months and learned a lot about ourselves, our children and how to navigate our new world. It is now time to get back to what we do best. To be clear, we are all anxious about this and we need to be patient with each other as we get to grips with back to school. Service delivery and the school environment will be markedly different. It is back to school. It is not back to normal, and we all need to be acutely aware of that. Below are some reminders to get us all through the next few days and weeks.

- **Masks:** Please remember to have your student wear a mask and to pack as many spares as you think your student needs. Please review the Superintendent's letter as to what types of masks are acceptable for school use. Students will need to wear masks at all times when inside buildings except to lower them to drink and eat their snacks. If they are working outside, or taking a break outside, students can take a 'mask break' as long as physical distancing can be maintained.
- **Arrival:** Please arrive promptly for your service delivery times or evaluative appointments. Wait outside the school at the main entrance in your family group, maintaining physical distancing from others who may also be waiting. Staff will come and collect your student from you, as well as the health form you will have completed.
- **The Health Form:** Please make sure you have reviewed and completed the health form before arriving at school. If you do not have it available, your student will not be allowed to enter the building. Staff will defer to the building principal about next steps, if you do not have the form to hand in.
- **Waiting:** You are welcome to wait in your car, in the parking lot, while your student receives services. Please do not block traffic circles or travel lanes if you choose to wait.
- **Dismissal:** Please arrive promptly at the time your student will be dismissed from school. Wait outside the school at the main entrance and staff will bring your student to you. Please maintain physical distance from others who may also be waiting. Staff will not be engaging in conversation with you as you leave. Any information they need to share with you will occur in a phone call or an email. Please don't try and engage staff in conversation as this potentially puts them in an awkward position.

- **Water fountains** are shut off in the school buildings, as they are everywhere in MA. Please make sure to send your student with a full water bottle. The school will have a supply of bottled water should your student need a refill.
- **Backpacks:** Students may bring a backpack that contains water, snacks, spare masks, wipes, hand sanitizer and their personal school supplies. None of these items should be shared with other students. Staff will be highly attentive to this issue. Backpacks will be stored under the students chair or in a space designated by the staff. Lockers are not available in any school buildings
- **Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing:** We are all aware that you can not do this frequently enough and we will be actively addressing this at all times. At a bare minimum, we will be requiring hand sanitization upon entry and exit from classroom spaces, after touching masks and eating snacks. Please remind your student that they will be asked to do this a lot. School staff may be the first adults outside your home to make this frequent demand. Please remind your student that school staff have the same responsibility as caregivers to insist on this practice.
- **Cleaning and Disinfecting Supplies:** All classrooms will have cleaning and disinfecting supplies, such as wipes, available. They will be offered to students if they feel more comfortable wiping their chair or their desk. No one will question their individual need to prepare their own work space.
- **Movement** in school will be closely monitored. In the opening five weeks, there will be low numbers of students in the building. This will allow your student to become comfortable in the environment. Staff will be doing a lot of walking and exploring the building in these opening weeks in order to normalize the environment as much as possible. Additional information about movement in school will be forthcoming as we approach starting the hybrid model. Clearly, it will be a different proposition when fifty percent of the school is back in session
- **Bathrooms:** Students will be able to use the bathrooms as independently as they were in March; however, bathroom capacity will be monitored and they may need to wait when they arrive at the bathroom. I know it is difficult, especially with younger students, but please encourage your student to speak up and not wait until the last minute to use the bathroom.
- **Working outside:** Each school has tent space available as well as benches and other areas where work can take place. We are encouraging staff to work outside as much as possible while the weather is good and we are able to do so. Please apply sunblock to your student before arrival in case they end up working outside. We will not be using playground equipment at this time. More information on this will be forthcoming.
- **Teacher PPE:** Teachers will be wearing masks at all times in the school building. They will take mask breaks as and when they can with your students. Teachers also have access to face shields and portable plexiglass screens. They will use their personal and professional judgement to decide when and in what combination to use these items. There is no universal, one size fits all requirement. Masks are the baseline and staff will move up that continuum as

they judge it to be appropriate. No personal judgement should be made about the level of PPE each staff person feels comfortable using.

- **Snack:** Please pack snacks that can be eaten from the packaging and are as 'neat to eat' as possible. This will help all of us maintain cleanliness.

I am optimistic that this will be a positive transition for many students. There will, however, be those for whom it does not go as well as we would like. We are not going to try to maintain students at school if there is genuine distress that we are unable to calm. Please do not plan on activities when your child is in school that would prevent you returning to pick them up if we need you to. This is really important and we all need to be prepared to fulfill this responsibility.

The special education staff have prepared as best they can for this opening and it has been hard and involved work. They should be commended for this and the work they are undertaking. If you are frustrated please do not direct this at them. Any upset should be directed at me in my role as the Director of Student Services.

Thank you for taking the time to read and digest this information. I am sure I have not covered everything so there will be more to come. We are really excited to see students in-person again and as always rely on your support. If we all work together with patience, kindness and flexibility, we will prevail. Please contact me if you have any questions. My email address is [richard\\_whitehead@waylandps.org](mailto:richard_whitehead@waylandps.org).

Enjoy the rest of the weekend.

Best wishes

*Richard Whitehead*

Richard Whitehead M.Ed  
Director of Student Services