



# Winthrop Public Schools

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**Lisa A. Howard**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

April 15, 2020

Dear Winthrop Families,

First, I hope that you and your families are all healthy and well during this difficult time. The past 5 weeks have been extremely difficult for all of us and it is my hope that we will soon see a shift in the number of people being diagnosed with COVID-19 so that we can get back to what was once considered “normal daily life”. I would like to thank you all for continuing to practice the social distancing guidance provided by the CDC as it appears to be successfully mitigating this highly transmittable virus.

COVID-19 school closures have been a source of uncertainty and the depth of how they will impact students remains equally difficult to predict. As you are aware, given the extended closure through May 3<sup>rd</sup>, we have adjusted the learning opportunities and expectations of our students and provided an update Remote Learning Plan to each individual school website. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with new expectations and reach out to your child’s Principal or teacher if you are having any difficulty with technology access, understanding of the daily expectations, posted schoolwork opportunities or access to food service. We have also revised the main Winthrop Public Schools webpage to make it easier to navigate and locate important sources of information and updates. Please look at the page as you will find information that will assist you in staying informed.

The “unknowns” have created a significant source of stress and anxiety for students, families and staff and we are intently focused on supporting each other during this time. We are aware of the difficulty that home learning presents to our families and the impact of this significant change of practice. Please understand that we are very mindful of the differences in family situations and the impact that various situations may have on your abilities to support the learning process at home. Our primary focus has and remains the safety, health and emotional well-being of our students, families, staff and community.

In the event that the current school closure mandate is extended by Governor Baker, we will likely be revising the Remote Learning Plans again to ensure our students are remaining engaged in learning and connected to their teachers. If there is to be an extension of the closure, the Department of Education will be providing all schools with additional guidance on deepening learning expectations and identifying common “power standards” by grade level that will guide and inform our Remote Learning Plan updates.

The entire Winthrop Public Schools staff is continuing to creatively plan daily and adapt our practice as we all adjust to this new form of teaching and learning. We are also engaged in deep discussion relative to addressing the academic, social and emotional needs of our students upon their return to the traditional form of classroom education. This includes planning for student assessment, curriculum map revisions, routine and engagement transitions and the creative rescheduling of important student events that may be missed during the closure. Our goal is to ensure that students are included in the process of getting back to what they are familiar and comfortable with. Your child’s Principal will keep you informed of the above and ensure that you are aware of our planning.

As we move forward, we will continue to follow the daily updates and guidance from the Center for Disease Control, the Department of Public Health, the Winthrop Health Department, the Massachusetts Department of Education and additional school specific information provided by Governor

Baker. We will provide you with the most updated information that we have so that you are kept informed and aware of any upcoming changes.

Below please find some additional resources that you may find helpful when speaking with your child regarding the coronavirus.

How to Talk to Children about the Coronavirus:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

Talking to Teen/Tweens about Coronavirus:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html>

\*\*Here is a pamphlet from the article: [https://www.hemot.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pamphlet\\_HEMOT\\_english.pdf](https://www.hemot.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Pamphlet_HEMOT_english.pdf)

A Comic created from NPR based on interviews with experts:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

The NASP released a resource for parents:

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

Please continue to stay in touch with us by visiting your child's school Remote Learning webpage daily and checking your email for Principal updates. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your child's Principal or teacher directly. Most importantly, stay healthy and safe. Sincerely,

**Lisa A. Howard**

Lisa A. Howard, M.Ed.