

## Important Update 3/18/20

Good Afternoon,

I would like to provide you with another update from the Winthrop Public Schools. Before I provide any new updates, I want to re-emphasize the importance of **social distancing**. Our current actions to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 will only be effective if we all do our part to support the greater health of our community.

**Social Distancing: means remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible.**

This out of school time is difficult for all of us and we encourage you to guide your children to practice social distancing and avoid interactions with people outside of your home such as attending playdates, going to malls or the theater, hanging out with groups of friends in community spaces, hanging out at playgrounds or meeting up in the Center. The goal is to limit the opportunity to become exposed to the coronavirus.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please be aware that our school buildings and central offices will be physically closed until further notice. Staff will be working remotely, and email is the suggested method for communicating with district personnel.

### Learning Resources and Opportunity

I know that many parents have been asking about what we will be providing for educational opportunities for students during the time that we are closed. This week our Administrative staff has been working diligently to put together a guidance and information document regarding learning opportunities for the students of the Winthrop Public Schools. Please understand that this document has been designed given the guidance and direction of the Mass Commissioner of Education. His guidance is quite clear in that districts should not be attempting to replicate the school day remotely- particularly because there are significant issues with student equity. This document will be posted on our website as well as each school home page on Wednesday, March 18th. I encourage all families to review the information and begin the process of having your student remain connected to learning experiences during this time of school closure. The learning opportunities that will be provided by the WPS are not intended to be a replication of a school day and work completed is not going to be graded by teachers nor is it considered mandatory. We would like to stress that **every student will benefit from staying engaged daily and staying connected to the routine of learning daily** and resources provided will have multiple levels of engagement access so that every child has access to learning opportunities. The amount of time spent on academic and extracurricular learning is at the discretion of each family and the resource we will be providing will assist you in making that happen. Each building Principal will reach out to their families directly on Wednesday, to provide you with detail related to your student's access to learning opportunities as well as information to assist you in connecting with teachers, school nurses and other essential staff.

For non-digital activities, one of the simplest things we can do is to ensure that all students read daily, keeping in mind that reading across all genres is important and encouraged.

Engaging in literacy activities such as writing, asking questions about what students are learning from what they are reading, will help student continue to develop critical thinking

skills which are essential across all grade levels. Any discussion that engages children in productive thinking is beneficial.

Our schools provide services that are beyond the typical academic instruction, particularly as it relates to the social and emotional needs of our students. We will be asking the adjustment counselors and guidance counselors to provide resources to our websites as well and be equally as accessible as our teachers will be by email. Principals will be including email contact information in their communication to families this week.

In the meantime, and in addition to what will be provided to you by individual schools, [please click](#) here for a multitude of additional resources for students and families.

### **Access to School Meals**

Beginning Wednesday of this week we will be providing Grab and Go meals for anyone in need. These meals are available to ALL students K-12 regardless of their status related to eligibility for free or reduced meal service.

The schedule of distribution is as follows:

**Beginning Wednesday, March 18th - Friday, March 27th, Grab and Go Meals will be prepared by our Food Service Staff and available for any WPS student in need.**

**Pick Up Location:** Rear parking lot next to baseball field and at the loading dock area) of Winthrop High School

**Hours of Pick Up:** 11:00am to 1:00pm

**Who is Eligible:** Any WPS student

**Cost:** \$0 There is no cost for any student

Food Service Staff will be available and on-site during distribution time to support the nutritional needs of our families.

If you are not able to come to the location to access the Grab and Go Meals, please email me so that we can come up with an alternative to ensure that your child has access to what they need. All information will be kept confidential so please do not hesitate to reach out to me. [lhoward@winthrop.k12.ma.us](mailto:lhoward@winthrop.k12.ma.us)

Thank you for your continued patience during these challenging times. Please stay connected to us by checking your email frequently, checking your student's school website, checking the Town of Winthrop Website and contacting me or your child's Principal directly when needed.

Sincerely,  
Lisa A. Howard, Superintendent of Schools