

WINTHROP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: March 30, 2020

The district is enacting a closure of school from March 13 - May 3, 2020 and school - related activities across the district.

The information detailed in this document is intended to provide guidance for this period. It is important to note that this is a fluid situation and so this document will be regularly updated and modified and it is recommended that you revisit frequently for the latest updates and information.

Frequently Asked Questions

Student Learning

Q. What is the current return to school date for students and staff?

A. The Governor of Massachusetts has ordered all schools to remain closed through May 3, 2020. As of now, students and staff are scheduled to return on May 4, 2020.

Q. What is going to happen in regards to Graduation and Senior Class Activities?

A. As this situation is ever changing we will have to wait to make decisions based on the directions provided by the state. Our goal is to not cancel anything but rescheduling some dates may be necessary. We will update students and parents as soon as any information is provided to us.

Q. Are the Distance Learning Expectations for Students Mandatory?

A. The expectation is a continuation of engagement in learning. For example, completion of school posted enrichment activities, individual daily reading, any type of online academic or social emotional learning practice, daily recommended posted lessons by school, physical exercise activities, etc. The Guidance from DESE suggests that we should not try to provide any digital or remote learning opportunities to replace in-person teaching during this closure. The Guidance varies some at the High School level. This is being done in the interest of ensuring equity of access to remain in line with our district core values.

Although these experiences are not mandatory and are not considered new instruction, it is strongly recommended that students remain engaged in some form of daily, structured learning so that they are ready to continue learning when we are able to return to school. The consistency of student engagement is critical to the successful rebound from this

	long term separation from the traditional classroom. We strongly encourage parents and guardians to partner with us in sending the message to our students that the engagement in learning on a daily basis is EXPECTED and will be a tremendous benefit to them when we do return.
Q.	What resources are available for teachers, parents, and students to enrich learning during this period of closure?
A.	We have created a Learning Opportunity Resources webpage for each school and you can access this directly by logging on to www.winthrop.k12.ma.us and clicking onto your students individual school. These sites will be updated frequently.
Q.	Given the closure, what happens with the MCAS testing for students?
A.	<p>MCAS information as of March 23, 2020: The Department is exploring all options around this year's testing requirements. To date, DESE has postponed both the Grade 10 English language arts assessment scheduled to begin on March 24 and the opening of the grades 3-8 English language arts assessment window scheduled for March 30. The Department will keep districts informed of decisions related to the spring 2020 assessment schedule and the competency determination. There may be an opportunity for a one-year assessment and accountability waiver from the federal government, but even if that is granted, we would need legislative relief from our state legislature to waive the state law around the testing requirement.</p> <p>Please be advised that MCAS-AIt portfolios do not need to be submitted by April 3, nor is it necessary to obtain a parent's signature that they have reviewed the portfolio prior to submission. The Department will contact schools at a later date regarding a new submission deadline.</p> <p>(DESE Advisory March 23, 2020)</p>
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Frequently Asked Questions Special Education	
Q.	My child is on an IEP or 504 Plan, and I am concerned about the implications of the closure on my child's educational progress.
A.	Upon the conclusion of the closure, and the re-opening of the district, IEP teams will be available to convene to determine what type of impact the closure had on your child's educational progress, and make individualized team based decisions as needed. Please refer to the following guidance.
Q.	My child is on an IEP and receives "services only" (i.e. speech/physical

	therapy/occupational therapy). Will my child receive these services during the closure?
A.	Services will not be provided during the closure, consistent with how this is handled on snow days.
Q.	I have made a request of the district for an Independent Evaluation at public expense on or after March 13th. What should I expect?
A.	Any timelines associated with an independent evaluation request received on March 13th or during the closure of schools, will be processed using the date the district re-opens as day one of the timeline. For example, if the district re-opens on May 4th, that would count as day one associated with timelines for an independent evaluation request. We have vetted this with our legal counsel.
Q.	I am looking for general tips on how to support my child during this two week closure.
A.	Please see the following resources for general tips that have been shared with us by Lunenburg Public Schools.
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Frequently Asked Questions Activities, Events, and Athletics	
Q.	Are there any athletic, club, or activity events happening during this period of closure?
A.	No. All school-related events are canceled during the time of school closure..
Q.	Are Spring Sports delayed?
A.	<i>Yes. No spring athletic teams are allowed to practice as a team at this point. After much discussion, the MIAA BOD decided to delay the start of the 2020 spring season through the school closure. More information will be provided to parents as it becomes known to the public school.</i>
Q.	How will the delays and cancellations impact user student fees and payments for coaches and student athletes related to the closure?
A.	We will be working with the School Committee to determine the process for refunding or adjusting all fees and stipends related to athletic events/seasons. More information will be forthcoming following further discussions with the School Committee and WTA.

Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Q.	How will the days of school closure count against school days?
A.	As of right now, WPS will be in school through June 23, 2020 which is our regularly scheduled 185th day.
Q.	Currently the schools are closed through May 3, 2020. Will this be extended? How will we be notified?
A.	As of today, Governor Baker has closed all schools through May 3, 2020. The Winthrop Public Schools will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will immediately inform everyone if and when any additional days are mandated to be closed.
Q.	What will happen to April vacation (April 20-24)?
A.	At this time the April vacation week is scheduled as planned. Students should be encouraged to continue to remain engaged in learning during the vacation week and access the website for suggested engagement opportunities during the week of April 20-24.
Q.	Will there be access to any school buildings during the school closure?
A.	No. At this time all school buildings are closed to students and staff. We are aware of building access requests and we will be communicating accommodations for reasonable requests in the near future.
Q.	Are schools being cleaned and or sanitized in preparation for the return on May 4, 2020?
A.	YES. Our custodial staff has been working daily to clean all schools. Additionally, and out of an abundance of caution, the Town of Winthrop has contracted with a cleaning company to professionally sanitize each school building at the end of April to ensure that all schools are ready for a safe opening.
Q.	Will food services be available for students that qualify for free and reduced lunch?
A.	Food Service will be provided for ALL WPS students in need, in the following manner: STUDENT ACCESS TO MEALS: GRAB AND GO Beginning Wednesday, March 18th Grab and Go Meals will be prepared by our Food Service Staff and available for any WPS student in need.

	<p>Pick Up Location: Rear parking lot next to baseball field and at the loading dock area) of Winthrop High School</p> <p>Hours of Pick Up: 11:00am to 1:00pm</p> <p>Who is Eligible: Any WPS student in need</p> <p>Cost: \$0 There is no cost for any student</p> <p>Food Service Staff will be available and on site during distribution time to support the nutritional needs of our families.</p> <p>If you are a student/family in need and do not have the ability to get to the location noted above, please contact the WPS @ 617-846-5500 or lhoward@winthrop.k12.ma.us and we will make arrangements to ensure your student has access to meals.</p>
Q.	What if I do not have access to technology or the internet?
A.	<p>If your student does not have access to technology, please email your Principal to further discuss your student's individual needs.</p> <p>Comcast offerers resources for families in need of internet service:</p> <p>https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19</p>
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<p>Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 Resources and Support</p>	
Q.	Should everyone be practicing social distancing?
A.	<p>Yes. "Now, we ask that you do your part. Creating social gatherings during the school outage will minimize the impact of closing school. Carefully consider the necessity of being together. This is not a vacation. It is an extreme measure to allow for social distancing so the virus is not spread. Not being exposed to the virus is the best way not to get sick. Please refer to this CDC webpage for other recommendations to prevent illness: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html"</p>
Q.	How do I contact the Emergency Operation Center Town Hotline?
A.	<p>The EOC can be reached at 617-539-5848, Monday through Friday, between 8</p>

	<p>a.m. and 4 p.m., or by emailing COVID19info@town.winthrop.ma.us</p> <p>COVID-19 Tip Hotline available on the Winthrop Public Safety website for those self-reporting or for a concerned member of the community. The hotline can be found at: https://winthroppublicsafety.com/covid-19-tip-hotline/</p>
Q.	Is there a Food Bank in the Town?
A.	<p>The Food Bank will be accepting donations on Mondays and Wednesdays from 11am to 1pm. The Food Bank is in need of non-perishable items such as canned goods, pasta, peanut butter and jelly, toiletries and paper products. Items without an expiration date cannot be accepted.</p> <p>Food will be distributed to Winthrop residents in need from 11am to 1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.</p> <p><i>Please have an ID showing Winthrop residency with you. Please remain in your vehicle; Food Bank volunteers will place items into your car. The volunteers are practicing social distancing and we respectfully ask you to do the same.</i></p> <p>The Food Bank is located at the rear (School Street) entrance to the Cummings Elementary School.</p> <p>If you are elderly, or homebound, please contact the Emergency Operations Center at 617-539-5848 so delivery arrangements can be made.</p> <p>For questions about the Food Bank or donations, please contact Matt Rodes at mrodes@town.winthrop.ma.us.</p>
Q.	Where can I access additional information about COVID-19 and Town services?
A.	<p>The Town encourages everyone to stay informed regarding COVID-19. The following resources are recommended for the most updated information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Winthrop Official COVID-19 updates: www.town.winthrop.ma.us/home/urgent-alerts/covid-19-public-health-updates • Winthrop Public Safety website: https://winthroppublicsafety.com/ • Winthrop COVID-19 Tip Hotline: https://winthroppublicsafety.com/covid-19-tip-hotline/ • Massachusetts Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/covid-19

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Massachusetts 2-1-1 general COVID-19 information: Click here or dial 2-1-1 (24/7) ● Massachusetts COVID-19 text updates: Text "COVIDMA" to 888-777 ● United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov ● The Children’s Advocacy Center of Suffolk County: https://www.suffolkcac.org/support-resources/covid-19-support
Q.	What is being recommended as Health Guidance at this time?
A.	<p><i>Health Guidance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As always, if anyone displays symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever, cough or shortness of breath, they should not go to work or school and are advised to contact their primary care physician. ● For residents that may be self-quarantined and require outside assistance or meal delivery, please email the EOC at COVID19info@town.winthrop.ma.us. ● Residents are advised to practice social distancing by keeping 6 feet between people to prevent the spread of infection which includes handshaking and hugging. Residents are also encouraged to avoid group activities and events. ● Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, including under your fingernails. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content) can be used when soap and water are not available. ● Keep your hands away from your face. ● Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with a tissue and discard it immediately. Cough into the sleeve over your elbow instead of your hand. Wash your hands often when coughing and sneezing. ● Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.
Q.	Where should I go for updates from the Town of Winthrop?
A.	Please click this link to stay connected to the Town Of Winthrop Notifications. Winthrop MA
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