

Frequently Asked Questions for Special Education students returning to School

What happens if my child cannot wear a mask on the bus?

Unless your child has a note from a doctor excusing them from wearing a mask due to a health related reason, all students must wear a mask on the bus. We understand that this may be a struggle for many children, and encourage you to practice mask wearing in the coming weeks in preparation for the start of the school year. If you require support, please contact us.

How many students will be on the bus and will you provide a shield if they won't wear a mask?

Wareham will follow all bus protocols set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. How many students will be on your child's van or bus will depend on the size and type of vehicle. Specific questions regarding your child's transportation can be directed to the Transportation Department.

What if my child cannot keep a mask on during the school day?

Unless your child has a note from a doctor excusing them from wearing a mask due to a health related reason, all students must wear a mask on the bus. We understand that this may be a struggle for many children, and encourage you to practice mask wearing in the coming weeks in preparation for the start of the school year. If you require support, please contact us.

What happens if a teacher or student contract COVID-what happens to my child?

Exposure Plan for Probable Positive COVID-19 Cases

Please note: information may change based upon guidance from the CDC, DESE, State or Local Board of Health

As of July 21, 2020

Exposure Defined as: Employees/students who were in close contact (within approximately 6 ft. for 10 minutes or longer) with a person who is considered to be a probable or is a confirmed case of COVID-19 from the period 48 hours before symptom onset to the time at which the patient is isolated

If any employee/student who was in close contact remains asymptomatic, the employee/student must adhere to the practices set out by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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“In school settings, close contacts include other students and staff within 6 feet of the student or staff for at least 10-15 minutes in a classroom, in other school spaces, on the bus, or at an extracurricular activity. In elementary and other school situations where the students are in self-contained classrooms for an extended period, all students/staff within this “cohort” are considered close contacts. They may have been within 6 feet of the person with a positive test result. Possible close contacts should not come back to school until they have been tested (or elected instead to self-quarantine for 14 days). If individuals test positive for COVID-19, then self-isolation is for a minimum of 10 days and until at least three days have passed with no fever and improvement in other symptoms as noted. If the test is negative, the student/staff can return to school if asymptomatic and wearing a mask.”

Can I keep my child home if I feel that he/she is not ready to return to school and if so how does that work?

As a parent or guardian, you have the right to opt out of in-person learning. Every parent/guardian will have the right to make this choice. Should you choose remote learning, your child can still receive any related services during the school day in a remote location. If your family makes the choice for remote only, we will work with you to arrange the details of scheduling your related services either in-person, or remotely.

What happens when my son or daughter acts up in school and deliberately takes their PPE off?

Students will have built in breaks to remove masks in a safe manner. Each individual school will be sharing that “mask break” schedule with parents. We will work with every child to understand the importance of mask wearing. In the event that a student is non-compliant, the student will be removed from the classroom, and the parent or guardian will be called to pick their child up. For the safety of all students, staff and families, all students and staff must wear masks unless they have medical documentation from a physician to the contrary.

Will the students be eating in the classroom or in the lunchroom?

Breakfast and Lunch will be a bag that will go home with the students at the end of the day.

What training do the teachers, therapists and Paras/PCA's have in preparation for the return to school?

All staff will spend the first 10 days of school training and preparing for all of the unique protocols associated with reopening during this Pandemic.

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What are the timelines for remote and hybrid and what does the schedule look like?

Starting on September 17, 2020, Special Education-Inclusion (80% of time in general education setting) and Other high needs (ELL, Homeless, SEL) will all participate in remote learning and remote related services. All Special Education students who spend more than 75% of the time in a special education classroom will be attending 4, half days (M,T, Th, F) starting on September 17, 2020. Specific schedule to follow.

Starting tentatively on October 5, 2020, half the inclusion students will come to school on a rotating basis for 2 half days per week. Remote learning services provided 3 days per week. Continued monitoring will occur to decide the next phase of the return plan.

How many students will be in my son's/daughter's classroom?

If your child is in a sub-separate classroom, the number of students will remain the same. We will be utilizing additional space as necessary to ensure appropriate social distancing.

If your child is in inclusion classrooms, the classrooms size will be approximately half of the usual classroom size to ensure appropriate social distancing.

What precautions will my child's individual support staff/therapists have in working with hygiene needs, behavioral needs, and/or communication needs?

All related service staff will follow all CDC protocols for mask-wearing, hand washing, toileting, physical intervention in order to ensure the safety of all students and staff. The district will provide every staff member with the PPE required per the guidance by the CDC, and the Department of Education. Students will not share materials, and will maintain appropriate social distancing at all times.

When and how will IEP meetings take place and how will I participate?

IEP meetings will be held remotely whenever possible to limit the number of people in a building, and the District will continue to work with families to meet timelines or agree to extensions for Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations, and IEP Meetings. The District will make every effort to maintain as much in-person instruction as is safely possible should a full closure once again be necessary.

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Will my child be penalized if I feel, once he begins school, that I need to keep him/her out for an extended period of time due to the threat of illness due to COVID?

No. Again, every parent or guardian will have the option of choosing full remote at any time should the Pandemic parameters change, or should you no longer feel comfortable with in-person learning.