

MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

August 31, 2020

Dear Marple Newtown Families,

We hope this communication finds you healthy and well and enjoying the last few weeks of summer. We wanted to reach out to all parents of students who have an IEP. We continue to understand your child's individualized needs as we begin the year in a virtual environment. Each child has their own unique set of needs as documented in their IEP.

Many of you have reached out with questions and we have provided the best responses at that given time. Each day we are creating and revising plans for our special education students based on the latest guidance from Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Chester County Health Department (CCHD), Center for Disease Control (CDC) and CHOP Policy Lab. Our special education teachers have taken an active role this summer participating in trainings and meeting collectively to plan for the start of the school year.

We have created a Question and Answer document [FAQ](#) to provide support for many of the questions we have received. Based on parent feedback regarding the instruction in March, we have designed a more robust master schedule. Based on this schedule, the special education teachers are looking at this closely to create an individualized schedule for each student, if warranted. This schedule will provide a closer look at when your child would receive related services such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, along with any individualized or small group learning opportunities.

As Dr. Kane indicated in her letter on August 5th, we recognize concerns regarding your students' possible regression toward meeting IEP goals. Once we return to school, the special education department, along with the teaching and learning team, will reassess, gather data, and evaluate goal areas within your child's IEP. The IEP team will identify appropriate interventions to meet your child's goals. The PA Department of Education has issued guidelines to schools to address these concerns and we will work collaboratively with IEP team members to determine the most appropriate course of action for each student.

Our district leadership team is closely monitoring data for our county and our local townships. When the county and local township data indicates that it is safe to do so, we will begin to bring in small cohorts of students for in-person instruction. This approach is supported by the Chester County Health Department and the CHOP PolicyLab guidance for reopening of schools. This plan is not locked in and does not have definitive dates attached to it. As we have seen over the last several months, the recommendations we receive change frequently and if this continues to occur, we may need to revise this plan. ALL Marple Newtown students will begin the school year virtually and we will begin to consider in-person instruction on or around September 21, 2020 when we are able to evaluate at least three weeks of data.

Heather Logue, Ed.D., Supervisor of Special Education

26 Media Line Road • Newtown Square, Pennsylvania 19073 • 610-359-4217 • Fax 610-723-3341 • www.mnsd.org

START STRONG

STAY STRONG

FINISH STRONG

MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Our first cohort of students, Special Education Cohort 1, will include our district's most complex learners with significant needs based on set criteria as identified by their IEPs. These parents received an email at the end of July from their child's special education teacher. This cohort is approximately 50 students. When data indicates it is safe to do so, we will bring in more cohorts of students. All of the other students with an IEP will continue to receive their special education services in the learning model the district is using at that time.

The district will continue to review the data in an attempt to bring students in for more face-to-face instruction, keeping in mind the priority of health and safety of all staff and students. The district may have to pivot to a fully virtual platform based on current data without much notice. If there is a positive COVID-19 case, the district will rely on the guidance of the CCHD and put the necessary actions steps into place.

We understand this is a challenging time given the uncertainty of the world and in schools and we thank you for your patience and cooperation. Our teachers return today, August 31st, and will begin contacting families. Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions; no question is too small. Please remember we are here for you and your child!

Sincerely,

Dr. Heather Logue

Supervisor of Special Education

Mr. Neil Evans

Substitute Director of Pupil Services

Heather Logue, Ed.D., Supervisor of Special Education

26 Media Line Road • Newtown Square, Pennsylvania 19073 • 610-359-4217 • Fax 610-723-3341 • www.mnsd.org

START STRONG

STAY STRONG

FINISH STRONG



Special Education Question and Answers relating to Special Education

Special Education Programming:

What will my child's program look like?

- Every child will have access to the supports and services in their IEP, if applicable, in the virtual setting.
- Your child will receive a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction, including your child's related services.

How will my child's related services be delivered?

- Delivery of related services will be a virtual model. The students will receive a combination of synchronous (live) and asynchronous (self-paced) instruction.

What will inclusion in the general education classroom look like?

- When students are learning remotely from home, they will be included in the general education classroom via video platforms.

How will my child's day look different if instruction is hybrid in the future?

- The students will go to school on an A/B schedule—A students (last name begins with A-L) will attend school in person on Monday/Tuesday. B students (last name begins with M-Z) will attend school on Thursday/Friday. Wednesday will be a virtual day for all students with the AM providing time for the A and B groups to meet. The students will receive their related services throughout the school day during asynchronous time provided in the schedule.

The district is trying to lessen the amount of transitions for a student in a school day. However, if a student requires small group instruction, the district will prepare for the necessary safety precautions with the use of masking, sanitizing, and distancing.

What measures are being utilized to protect my child when school resumes in session?

- Children will have their own materials to limit exposure from one child to another. Sanitization stations will be stationed throughout the building and materials will be thoroughly cleaned if there is a need to share. Additionally, in areas such as occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech/language therapy, materials and areas will be cleaned prior to the arrival of the next group.
- 6 feet social distancing guidelines are also in effect on the school buses.

I believe my child has shown regression during the closure. What is the district's plan to support this?

- PDE's guidance recommends that once students return to in person instruction, teachers will gather baseline data within a few weeks. If it is determined based on the data collected that regression has occurred, the teacher will implement a plan to recoup the skills. This is similar to an ESY determination. The teachers will monitor the student progress over a period of three months (once in person instruction begins). IEP teams will come together to review the data collected and make a determination if the child requires Covid compensatory services.

What is the timeline for collecting data towards regression and recoupment?

- PDE has established that the first 90 days after schools reopen for face to face instruction will serve as the timeline for data collection, recoupment instruction, and progress monitoring to determine if students have recouped their skills as of March 13, 2020.

IEP meeting and Paperwork:

What will my child's IEP look like in a virtual model?

- Your child's case manager will review each student's IEP and will reach out to the parents to discuss any changes due to instruction being delivered in a virtual model.

What will an IEP meeting look like?

- The district is not having any outside visitors enter any school building. Therefore, an IEP meeting will look very similar to the way meetings occurred after March 13, 2020. Meetings will be held virtually via zoom with all participants.

How will documents be sent and signatures received?

- Documents will be signed and sent electronically. A Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) will also be signed electronically, when possible. If you require a hard copy, please inform your child's case manager.

Evaluations/Reevaluations:

My child was supposed be tested last school year but with the closure has been delayed. How will this process resume?

- The school psychologists and/or case managers were able to complete the reports requiring teacher and parent feedback, curriculum based assessments and a review of records. Psychological testing could not be completed because it required in person testing to protect the assessment's validity. The district has purchased PPE equipment to allow for in person testing to resume while following recommending social distancing guidelines. The school psychologist will get in touch with you to make arrangements for your child to receive testing.

Will testing be completed during virtual learning?

- Yes, psychological testing will resume when school begins for the 2020-2021 school year. Parents will need to sign a testing protocol before the student can be tested.

How will I know my child is ready to be tested by the school psychologist?

- The school psychologists will call or email with a day and time for a parents to bring the child to the respective building.

Will PPE be used?

- The psychologist will utilize PPE during testing, including a mask, shield, gloves, sanitizer, and plexiglass. Tables and materials will also be disinfected in between students' use. Students will also wear a mask.