

Gardner Public Schools



Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel

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Dear Parent/Guardian/Caregiver,

As you are aware, the state has taken preemptive measures to close schools for the next three weeks in response to concerns given the unprecedented situation created by the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

These are extraordinary times and the information and guidance from local, state and federal authorities has resulted in decisions and actions that need to be nimble to adapt to the quickly changing environment. Please see the guidelines issued by the Office of Special Education Programming: [OSEP Guidance issued March 2020](#). At this time, the following district guidelines are in effect.

Special Education Services:

Services will not be provided during the closure, consistent with how this is handled on snow days.

New Referrals/Initial Eligibility:

Gardner Public Schools, along with other schools in the commonwealth, will freeze evaluation, referral, and plan distribution timelines for all students in a referral cycle during school closure. This means that as soon as schools open again, the timelines will commence as is required by state and federal regulations.

Annual Reviews/Evaluations in Process:

Gardner Public Schools, along with other schools in the commonwealth, will freeze evaluation, referral, annual review, and plan distribution timelines for all students on IEPs and 504s during school closure. This means that as soon as schools open again, the timelines will commence as is required by state and federal regulations. Additionally, at that time we will be working with families to understand the impact of the closure on students.

Home/Hospital Tutoring:

Home and Hospital Tutoring occurs outside of the school buildings, and as such, parents/guardians/caregivers can decide whether or not they will allow tutoring staff into their homes. As a practice, Gardner Public Schools does not provide tutoring when school is not in session. For students currently on approved home or hospital tutoring occurring within a hospital or facility, Gardner Schools will follow the recommendations of the individual facility, understanding that their ability to allow contracted service providers is contingent upon perceived health and wellness for all in accordance with state and CDC guidelines.

Out of District School Placements (Public Day and Private Day School):

Per state mandate, all Out of District Days Schools are closed for the next three weeks. Transportation will resume once schools are back in session.

365 Day Residential Placements:

For students in 365 day residential placements, Gardner Public Schools will follow the attendance recommendations of the individual school or facility. If the 365-day residential school decides to close, decisions will be made on a case by case basis, understanding that our ability to send staff or contracted service providers into homes is contingent upon their perceived health and wellness in accordance with and CDC guidelines.

Counseling

If your child is in crisis, whereas they are a threat to themselves or others, you should call 911. If your child is seeing a private counselor, please refer to the agency's or private counselor's policy or recommendation. Community Health Link Mental Health Emergency Hotline including Youth Mobile Crisis Intervention can be accessed by calling 1-800-977-5555.

SEPAC

The Special Education Parent Advisory will cancel all activities during the mandatory closure.

Please visit the district website to access resources and strategies parents can use with their children at home.

District leaders are in constant communication with our liaisons at both the state and federal level, and will communicate any updates as a district and department in a timely manner.

Take care,

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