

METUCHEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan - October 2021

All districts required to “annually submit its proposed program for virtual or remote instruction (plan) to the Commissioner of Education.”

- Board of Education needs to approve on October 26
- Due to County office by October 29
- Must be posted on website

This plan would be implemented during a district closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure. A day of virtual instruction under this plan is considered the equivalent of a full day of school attendance for the purposes of meeting State and local graduation requirements, awarding of course credit, and such other matters as determined by the Commissioner of Education.

1. Access to devices and broadband - We have significantly upgraded our bandwidth over the years and have had no issues at school. We have a number of mobile hotspots that we distributed to families as needed in 2020. We would do the same thing in a future situation. Students in grades 3 through 12 are issued Chromebooks for use at school and home. Students in grades 1 and 2 are individually assigned Chromebooks that remain in carts in the classroom. In the event remote instruction became necessary again, those devices would be removed from the carts (by the IT Office) and distributed to the students with a charger. For tech support, the IT staff would operate remotely via email until such time that a return to one of the buildings is deemed safe. Then they would offer on-site tech support via appointments and scheduled drop-in hours.
2. Lunch program - In 2019 and 2020, we worked closely with our food services provider to ensure that all families could have access to free meals. We would do the same thing in a future situation. Meals would be distributed from MHS, mindful of traffic concerns at arrival or dismissal. For families without the means to pick up meals, we would again use volunteer parents to deliver around town and/or use our school buses midday to deliver meals to homes.
3. Required school day length - Our default is full days, five days per week, according to regular school schedules. The superintendent reserves the right to call planned early dismissal days (four hours) for snow removal, storm damage cleanup, or other reasons, as necessary.
4. Learning platform – Virtual instruction will take place via Google Meet and links and assignments will be posted on Google Classroom (or Class Dojo for early learners). Each teacher would provide a link to all students for this synchronous instruction.

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5. Attendance - Should be taken and recorded by the teacher and monitored by administrators in case of extenuating circumstances.
6. Remote learning student expectations – Cameras on is the starting expectation. Some teacher discretion is allowable. Cameras should be on for the whole group instruction (I do) time. Camera rules can be more flexible for the “We do” and “You do” portions of the workshop model. No recording of lessons should happen unless the teacher initiates as an instructional support tool. A developmentally appropriate level of student independence is expected. See the Remote Learning Model below for further details.
7. Students with IEPs – These IEPs will be implemented to the greatest extent possible.
8. Services like ELL, Counseling, 504, and I&RS – These mandated services will be implemented to the greatest extent possible. We will work with ESS and Rutgers Behavioral Health Care to ensure those services continue. RtI services would continue as prescribed.
9. Grading – Business as usual; teachers have discretion to postpone assessments that might be best administered when all students are in person.
10. Quarantine instruction – In most circumstances, supplemental quarantine tutoring services would not be necessary when the entire class is implementing remote instruction. Supports for supplemental quarantine instruction would be considered on an “as needed” basis.

Additional Expectations for Remote Learning Model:

If there is group remote learning, the nature of group remote learning, means that students' names and live video could potentially be seen by anyone in the background of the students who are participating, and that students may see actions in the background of other students. Students' information, such as, but not limited to, classification status, accommodations, related services, academic levels and/or skills may also be inadvertently disclosed to others during group sessions. In order to protect the confidentiality of the students and their performance, parents should not be present during virtual learning unless prearranged and approved by the District.

When one or more students are learning remotely, the superintendent or designee may authorize an instructor to live stream a classroom lesson, as long as it is announced prior. In addition, it is expected that students and parents adhere to the following guidelines during all virtual learning:

- Students must be prepared for virtual learning, i.e. have devices ready and charged if needed, papers/notebook, pencil/pen, etc. at least 10 minutes before the scheduled start time
- Be on time.

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- Video must be turned on, unless specified otherwise by the teacher, administrator or support staff
- Expectations for behavior, language and overall conduct should be consistent with the expectations for regular in person class time. This includes attire, language, behavior, topics discussed, by way of examples. In other words, if it wouldn't be appropriate in the physical classroom, it isn't appropriate in the virtual setting. See district HIB policy for explanation of virtual/cyber bullying.
- Chats should only be used to ask questions related to the lesson. Any inappropriate language will not be tolerated.
- Always behave as if your camera and microphone are on.
- Parents may not make an attempt to listen in on sessions and/or record them.
- Do not screenshot or record anything during the meeting.
- Do not have side conversations. The microphone will pick up other noises in the room.
- School devices should always be treated with respect and handled in a manner that will allow them to function properly.
- Students and parents are required to adhere and comply with all applicable Board policies governing the use of technology.
- See the District's acceptable use policy for further explanation of technology use.
- Students may not use cellular devices during virtual classes, unless approved by the teacher.
- No eating during class; snack breaks for younger students will be built into the schedule as well as lunch for all students on full virtual days. Eating during class is very distracting to other students.
- We understand that for younger students, parent help/support may be required for logging on. We ask that once a student is logged in, the space be used as a classroom and parents do not engage in the classroom setting. Parents should not respond to student questions or interact with the class. We further ask that parents please be cognizant that conversations off screen are picked up by the microphone and can be heard by the class.
- The District takes the confidentiality of our students' educational information and personally identifiable information very seriously. We also hold the same high regard for the integrity, privacy, educational practice, and professionalism of our faculty and staff.