



BERKSHIRE HILLS REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

GREAT BARRINGTON • STOCKBRIDGE • WEST STOCKBRIDGE

Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: March 27, 2020

Per Governor Baker, the schools are now closed until Monday, May 4 2020. We will keep you updated as this information is evolving quickly.

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.

Click on the link below for the questions specific to:

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Food Distribution

Q. Can my child still get meals from the school?	
A.	Yes. You can email our Food Services Director Kathy Sullivan at meals@bhrrsd.org or call her at 413-644-2325 to let her know that you would like meals for your student. When you respond, please let her know how many children in your family will need meals.
Q. How do I get my childrens' meals?	
A.	There are four sites where you can pick up boxes of food for your student(s) on Fridays, between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Please remain in your car and the food will be delivered to you. Monument Valley Regional Middle School - front student drop-off loop. Housatonic - parking lot of the "Housie Dome." Great Barrington Fire Department - on the west side of the building along North Street. Stockbridge - on the park side of the Town Hall building.
Q. Can the rest of my family also get food?	
A.	Our offerings are primarily to ensure that we are supporting you in feeding your children. We will be offering boxes of food on Fridays, for pickup at the locations listed above or delivered to your home, if you are unable to get to the sites. Please email your request for the weekly box of food to meals@bhrrsd.org or call Kathy Sullivan at 413-644-2325.
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Student Learning

Q. Are the days during the extended closure counted as "school days?"	
A.	No. These are non-school days. These days will essentially be considered an extended school closing period (March 16 - May 4, 2020). There is no expectation of online

	learning or for the provision of educational services during this period. It is important to note that the school year will not extend beyond the 185th day (June 24th, 2020).
Q.	Are there expectations around distance and online learning for students and/or teachers?
A.	<p>These are non-school days and so there is only an expectation of continuation of learning. This would be similar to completing enrichment activities, reading lists, math packets, online practice, etc. BHRSD is working on making educational supports available in an equitable way to all our students.</p> <p>The resources sent home to students are for enrichment only and not intended to replicate learning and modifications in a school day. They are not required and will not be counted or graded by the district. We are doing our best to help families keep students engaged in practice of previously learned skills and materials and to make them as accessible as feasible under the circumstances. Teachers and providers are also available for check-ins and may answer questions about the materials and resources provided, but will not be providing any direction instruction. Special education staff are happy to connect with you on ideas about how to make the activities more accessible for your individual child.</p> <p>All teachers and providers should be contacting their students to ensure a “continuation of learning” as described above. Teachers should communicate, insofar as they are able, at least once with their classes, providing what they have determined to be the best pathway towards a continuation of learning. Teachers should communicate as close to the beginning of each week as possible and check in at the end of each week.</p> <p>Any teacher who needs assistance in effectively communicating with all of their classes efficiently should contact their principal.</p> <p>Again, these experiences are not mandatory and are not considered instruction. For all students K-12, there will be no assignments or additional learning provided by the district or teachers. This is being done in the interest of ensuring equity of access to remain in line with our district core values. Additionally, we are not allowed to provide any digital or remote learning opportunities to replace in-person teaching during this closure, based on guidance from the MA Commissioner of Education.</p>
Q.	What options are available for Mobile / Satellite / Fiber Internet?
A.	Please see the COVID-19 Internet Support list for service providers in the area.
Q.	Given an extended closure, what happens with the MCAS ELA test for sophomore students?
A.	At this time we will not be in school during the previously scheduled MCAS window. We expect to hear more from DESE in the near future on this topic as all Massachusetts public high schools are in the same position.
Q.	What are my responsibilities as a special education teacher or related service provider for the students on my caseload during this closure?

A.	<p>The expectation that has been communicated by the Department of Education is that you are checking in with families during this school closure. This can be done through phone calls and email correspondence. You should use your professional judgment and your knowledge of your students to determine the frequency for which these check-ins should occur. For some students, once per week might be appropriate, and for other students, checking in more frequently might be warranted. If you feel as though you need guidance on this, please consult with your principal and the Director of Student Services.</p> <p>The purpose of these check-ins is to provide suggestions to families on appropriate activities that can be done with their child during this time. The overarching goal is that this communication can help to minimize the disruption for these students to the extent possible. You can also use this time during the closure to review and analyze data, complete IEP prep work for future meetings, and complete progress report prep work.</p>
Q.	<p>I am an ETL, what are my responsibilities during this extended school closure?</p>
A.	<p>The expectation is that you use this time to complete paperwork: write IEPs, prepare meeting invitations and N1s for upcoming meetings. If you have questions, as always, please consult with Kate Burdsall for guidance.</p>
Q.	<p>I am a contractor who provides related services to students on an IEP. What are my responsibilities during this extended closure?</p>
A.	<p>The expectation is that you provide suggested activities that can be done at home for your students, and share this with them through checking in with families. This can be done either by phone or through email. Click here for information on private calling.</p>
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<h2>Special Education</h2>	
Q.	<p>Are special education services being provided during the school closure?</p>
A.	<p>Consistent with federal and state guidelines, while our school district is closed during this ongoing public health emergency we are not providing any educational services, including special education services, or FAPE to any students during this period of school closure. The district has carefully weighed the significant safety and equity concerns and has decided that all services including home services, evaluations, and tutoring must remain closed. Please refer to the DESE COVID-19 FAQ.</p>

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 CDC COVID-19 FAQ .
Q.	Will the district be holding IEP meetings during the closure?
A.	At present the District is not holding IEP meetings during the school closure. We will be reassessing this possibility as we move through the school closure period. Currently we do not have the necessary technology, procedures, and protocols in place to do this equitably and maintain our compliance and confidentiality requirements. We will reach out to reschedule your meeting when we have a better sense of our return date.
Q.	My child is on an IEP, and attends an out of district placement. What are the implications of BHRSD’s closure on my child attending the out of district placement?
A.	At this time, all out of district placements that BHRSD sends students to are closed with the exception of Berkshire Meadows. As we move forward, please communicate directly with the out of district school for any updates on their closures or reopenings. Please refer to the CDC COVID-19 FAQ .
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.	Will my child’s special education liaison, related service provider, and ETLs be available if I have a question during this extended closure?
A.	Yes, special education teachers, related services providers, ETLs, as well as the Director of Student Services will be available to assist with specific questions as needed. You can expect a “check in” from your child’s liaison, in the form of a phone call or through email. Click here for information on private calling.
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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 this period.
Q.	Are Spring Sports delayed?
A.	Yes. The MIAA Board of Directors voted to amend the start of the 2020 spring sports season to April 27, 2020 . This is a fluid situation and could continue to change. No practices, including “captains’ practice” can be held. See the FAQ page from the MIAA .
Q.	Are the Monument Valley and Monument Mountain Musical cancelled?
A.	At this time these events are cancelled with no plan to reschedule.
Q.	Is the April 18th Berkshire Grown Farmers’ Markets at Monument Valley cancelled?
A.	Yes, this event has been cancelled. This is a fluid situation and will be re-evaluated as new information becomes available.
Q.	Are the spring concerts at the elementary, middle and high school cancelled?
A.	These events have not yet been cancelled. This is a fluid situation and will be re-evaluated as new information becomes available.
Q.	Is the May 6th Special Olympics at Monument Mountain cancelled?
A.	Yes, the Special Olympics on May 6, 2020 have been cancelled. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact update@specialolympicsma.org .
Q.	Have prom or graduation been cancelled?
A.	At this time, these events have not been cancelled. It is too early to make decisions related to senior events at Monument Mountain. This is a fluid situation and will be re-evaluated as new information becomes available.
Q.	How will the delays and cancellations impact stipends and payments for coaches and advisors?
A.	All activity and athletic stipends will be reviewed. More information will be forthcoming following further discussions between BHEA and the District.
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General Questions

Q.	How will the days of an extended closure count against school days?
A.	BHRSD schools are scheduled to reopen on Monday, May 4 2020. At present, MA DESE has amended school year requirements, allowing latitude for local decision-making. BHRSD has established that the school year will be minimally extended through June 24, 2020.
Q.	Currently the schools are scheduled to reopen on May 4 2020. Will the closure be extended? How will we be notified?
A.	BHRSD will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will make the best determinations in the best interest of the students and staff. Information will continue to be provided via regular emails from the superintendent and principals. Our automated phone system will be used to reach out by phone to all district families. Our website, www.bhrsd.org will continue to be updated daily and all changes to district status will be broadcast via major news outlets. During the closure, messages left at schools will continue to be checked remotely at least twice daily. Administrators will return calls as promptly as possible.
Q.	Will there be access to any school buildings during the March 13 - May 4 2020 closure?
A.	At this time all school buildings are closed to everyone for a deep cleaning. Currently, no building access is granted to any building users for the duration of the closure. Building users with questions should contact the respective principal or Director of Operations, Steve Soule .
Q.	How will the school community provide information on travel, health, and other important factors that will help us to determine our readiness to reopen?
A.	The governor of Massachusetts has declared a state of emergency and directed the closure of all schools. If the governor revises or suspends this order, the district would review its readiness to reopen based on information from the community. The district is currently considering a process to collect this information.
Q.	Will food services be available for students that qualify for free and reduced lunch?
A.	BHRSD has implemented a lunch and next-day breakfast meal program for students. With community partners, the district is distributing family food boxes once a week to families of BHRSD students. Please refer to the Food Distribution section of this FAQ for more information.
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COVID-19 Resources and Support

Q.	Should everyone be practicing social distancing?
A.	Yes. Gathering 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 the CDC for other recommendations to prevent illness .
Q.	How do I contact my local Board of Health?
A.	Great Barrington: Rebecca Jurcyk, Health Agent 413-528-0680 Stockbridge: TriTown Board of Health: 413-243-5540 West Stockbridge: Earl Moffat, Board of Health Agent 413-232-0300 x314
Q.	Where should I go for updates from the Towns of Great Barrington, Stockbridge or West Stockbridge?
A.	The towns' websites are consistently updated with new information. You can see this information here: https://www.townofgb.org/ https://townofstockbridge.com/ https://www.weststockbridge-ma.gov/
Q.	What state and other resources and supports are available to families?
A.	Do you need assistance quickly? Get the answers you need. It's Free! It's confidential. Multilingual. Dial 2-1-1. Or search online MASS 211 . Youth Services, Elder Care, Fitness, Food, Escape Violence, Housing, Income Assistance, Legal Aid, LGBTQ, Medical Care, and Insurance, Mental Health, Nutrition, Parenting, Safety Equipment, Sexual and Health Testing, Special Health Care Needs, Transportation, Utilities, Work. HEARING IMPAIRED INFORMATION Callers can use Mass Relay (7-1-1). 7-1-1 is the single, toll-free, nationwide number that gives everyone access to relay services. People can simply dial 7-1-1 from any phone to reach someone who uses a standard phone or a TTY. An operator will relay verbatim the conversation between the parties.
Q.	Are there resources available that will help me to talk to my children about COVID19?

A.	Yes. BHRSD has collected numerous articles and resources that may help you. Please visit https://www.bhrsd.org/covid-19/ .
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<h2>Employment/Human Resources</h2>	
Q.	Will teachers, staff, faculty be compensated during the three week closing period?
A.	Yes, all active teachers, staff, and faculty members will be compensated their regular bi-weekly or weekly pay during the school closure period. Hourly employees will be compensated based on their standard weekly schedule and at their hourly rates as if school was operating normally. How this may impact your accrued time (sick, personal, vacation, etc.) may need to be discussed at a later date with Union Leadership.
Q.	How will this impact hourly/contractual employees?
A.	There may be some nuances to hourly/contractual employees. Your direct supervisor will be in touch to communicate more information about expectations during the school closure period.
Q.	How will you receive your paycheck if you are an employee that does not have direct deposit?
A.	Paychecks for those employees who do not have direct deposit will be mailed to the employee's home address each Friday.
Q.	Will staff members on an approved leave of absence during the closure period be credited back any accrued time off (sick, personal) etc.?
A.	Yes, given these days will be classified as non-work days, for those staff members on an approved FMLA those days will not count towards any accrued time during their leave.
Q.	Will the District Office staff to work/staggered shifts if needed during the three week closing period?
A.	Payroll and accounts payable personnel will be working at staggered times during the three weeks, to ensure payroll is processed and bills are paid, while maintaining social distancing to keep everyone safe. All District Office staff are asked to remain as vigilant as possible in monitoring email communications and tasks remotely during this closure period.
Q.	What are the obligations for staff during the closure?

A.	<p>Staff are expected to remain as vigilant with their duties and responsibilities to the extent possible with monitoring email communications and essential duties remotely while remaining safe. The closure period is not considered a vacation period.</p> <p>Teachers may continue to grade papers, assessments, look at data, prepare future lessons, etc. Teachers should be aware of the teaching and learning expectations described above.</p>
Q.	<p>During the closure will Custodial Staff be expected to work to clean and disinfect touch point areas including technology devices?</p>
A.	<p>Yes. Custodial staff will be expected to complete the deep cleaning of all schools thoroughly during the closure period before not reporting to work. Additional staff will report to work on a specified day during the closure to clean and disinfect all technology equipment.</p>
Q.	<p>Will staff receive guidance on cleaning their personally issued Laptop/Device prior to returning to school?</p>
A.	<p>Yes. Our tech teams will be providing specific feedback and advice for various tools and technology.</p>
Q.	<p>Am I able to protect my privacy if making a phone call to a parent/family from a personal line?</p>
A.	<p>Verizon, AT&T, and Comcast do the following...</p> <p>To block your number from being displayed temporarily for a specific call:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enter *67. 2. Enter the number you wish to call (including area code). 3. Tap Call. The words "Private," "Anonymous," or some other indicator will appear on the recipient's phone instead of your mobile number.
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