

Swansea Public Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: April 2, 2020

Currently closure of school and school-related activities across the district is from March 16-May 4, 2020: Extension of this closure came from the Governor: this decision is not within our local control.

As we navigate through the unfamiliar situation that our community is facing, we wanted to provide some information to help navigate the uncertainty. With the fluidity of the situation, and the speed at which things are changing, we look to the state for guidance.

Some decisions are out of our control, so we will do our best to operate in the interest of our students and school community.

Ongoing collaboration with our administrative team, union leaders, the Department of Public Health and the state affords us the ability to provide leadership during this critical time. We will continue to provide updates as information becomes available.

Be well

Frequently Asked Questions

Student Learning

Q. Are the days during the closure counted as “school days?”

A. No. These are non-school days. These days will essentially be considered a closing period.

Q. Are there expectations around Distance and Online Learning Expectations for Students or Teachers?

A. These are non-school days and so there is only an expectation of continuation of learning.

	<p>Teaching staff and providers have Google Classrooms/Sites and other venues where they are posting assignments and learning opportunities during the closure for access by students and guardians.</p> <p>In order to be in line with the Commissioner's updated guidance, teachers will begin providing instruction that equates to half of our normal teaching block for each class, for a total amount of instruction and learning opportunities equal to approximately 3.5 hours per day. These updated expectations are to be in place by week's end.</p> <p>These experiences are not considered instruction meant to replicate a school day, based upon guidance from the MA Commissioner of Education.</p> <p>Grading of assignments is not a requirement as not all situations are equitable. Flexibility upon return to school will be key in determining where things stand with teaching/learning at that time. Grades for secondary students will be Term 1, Term 2 and Term 3 up until closure of school on March 13. Term 4 assignments will be determined as credit/no credit. Discussion regarding Trimester 3 for elementary students is ongoing and 'to be determined' at this juncture.</p> <p>Promotion to next grade and graduation will need to be further explored and addressed based upon further guidance as the situation unfolds</p>
<p>Q.</p>	<p>What resources are available for teachers, parents, and students to enrich learning during this period of closure?</p>
<p>A.</p>	<p>We are continuing to compile resources and links for all students and will share that information on our website and via Google platform by teachers and providers.</p> <p>WGBH is providing online resources and working to establish television broadcasting of educational programming</p>
<p>Q.</p>	<p>How is MCAS, AP and SAT affected during the closure?</p>
<p>A.</p>	<p>At this time, MCAS scheduled during the closure has been postponed, more guidance from SAT will be forthcoming, here is a link to College Board/AP information:</p> <p>https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/about-ap/news-changes/coronavirus-update</p>
<p>Q.</p>	<p>What are my responsibilities as a special education teacher/related service provider, for the students on my caseload during this closure?</p>
<p>A.</p>	<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. If you feel as though you need guidance on this, please consult with the Director of Student Services. Dr. Garell will be communicating with families and staff as well via correspondence that outlines the guidance from the state at this juncture.</p>

	<p>The purpose of these check ins would be 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 complete IEP-related paperwork</p>
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<p>Frequently Asked Questions Special Education</p>
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Q.	My child is on an IEP 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 visit Department of Student Services website for information
Q.	My child attends an out of district placement. What are the implications of Swansea’s closure on my child attending the out of district placement?
A.	Swansea does not provide transportation during school closures.
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. Please refer to Google Classroom/Sites for activities and resources
Q.	Will my child’s special education teacher and related service provider be available if I have a question during this closure?
A.	All teachers and providers can be contacted via email for specifics related to your child
Q.	What happens with evaluation timelines during the closure? What should I expect?
A.	All evaluations will be postponed based upon the fact that days of closure are non-school days
Q.	I am looking for general tips on how to support my child during this closure.
A.	Please refer to the Google Classroom/Site that has been established by your student’s teacher/provider. Resources and information will also be posted on the Department of Student Services website.

Frequently Asked Questions 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. At this time, the MIAA BOD decided to <i>delay the start of the 2020 spring season, date to be determined</i>
Q.	Are all School-based activities cancelled?
A.	At this time these events are cancelled. More information will be forthcoming as the situation evolves

Frequently Asked Questions General Questions

Q.	How will the days of the closure count against school days?
A.	Swansea Schools will be in school through June 19, 2020 which is our regularly scheduled 185th day.
Q.	Currently the schools are closed through May 4, 2020. Will this be extended? How will we be notified?
A.	The Swansea Public Schools will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will make the notifications via our normal venues: On twitter @superswansea16 , on our website, via one-calls from principals and on local news broadcast of school closings
Q.	What will happen to April vacation (April 20-24)?

A.	At this juncture, the April vacation week is scheduled as planned. We will continue to follow the approved 2019-2020 school calendar
Q.	Will there be access to any school buildings during the closure?
A.	At this time all school buildings are closed for cleaning, and are only opened to those authorized to be in the buildings
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.	Our guidance, at this point, is coming from the state level and there are too many unknowns at this time. We will continue to post updates on our websites as we receive them
Q.	Will food services be available for students that qualify for free and reduced lunch?
A.	The state guidelines for reimbursement for free and reduced lunches has been changed, therefore Swansea Public Schools is working to begin providing 'Grab and Go' meals to our free and reduced population. Further information is forthcoming

Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 Resources and Support	
Q.	Should everyone be practicing social distancing?
A.	Yes. Creating social gatherings during the school outage will negate 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 this CDC webpage for other recommendations to prevent illness: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention.html

Frequently Asked Questions Employment/Human Resources

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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/providers will ensure that they are posting/providing, via Google platform and other venues, daily lessons and learning opportunities for students, which is a shift from the original provision of alternate enrichment activities. Educators will be connecting with students on a regular basis to provide feedback and assistance.</p> <p>DESE has indicated that License deadlines will be extended to 90 days after the state of emergency has been lifted</p> <p>SEI endorsement is expected to be available online soon</p>
Q.	During the closure will Custodial Staff be expected to work to clean and disinfect touch point areas including technology devices?
A.	<p>Yes. Custodial staff will be expected to complete the deep cleaning of all schools thoroughly during the closure period.</p>
Q.	Am I able to protect my privacy if making a phone call to a parent/family from a personal line?
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.