



**Athol-Royalston Office of Pupil Personnel**

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To: Families of Students with Disabilities  
From: ARRSD Pupil Services Department  
Date: April 6, 2020

Dear Families,

As we enter week four of our school closure Christie, Diane and I would first like to share our warmest regards. We miss our students and the day to day bustle of busy school buildings. As we move deeper into remote learning, we have a greater understanding of how to provide connection, support and services in a way that is safe and accessible for our students.

During the school closure, your child is eligible to receive accommodations and services in his/her IEP consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, families, teachers and staff. By now, you should have heard from your child's special education teacher at least twice a week and have an understanding of how to access online resources for modifications, accommodations and remote opportunities for learning specific to your child's needs. Our teachers and related service providers are following the guidance provided by the state to "make every effort to use creative strategies to provide special education instruction and services to the extent feasible" (DESE Coronavirus FAQs March 26, 2020).

**Below are some more details about Special Education for ARRSD families in a Question/Answer format:**

**What can I expect?**

You can expect to hear from your child's general education teachers, special education teacher and related service providers multiple times per week. At this point, you and your child's special education teacher should have agreed upon the frequency of calls you need and developed a schedule for check-ins.

**What if I don't know who my liaison is or I haven't heard from anyone?**

Call or email the principal of your school.

**Can I expect an individual service/session, (i.e. Orton Gillingham, a related service), to be administered remotely during the closure?**

Our teachers and related service providers will be providing opportunities to learn based on your child's IEP, but during this time of closure, this may look very different than when school is fully in session.

**Will the special educator and related service provider match the frequency and duration as indicated in the IEP?**

During this time of closure, services will be provided differently than when school is fully in session.

**How will extended year services be addressed?**

As the closure continues, more information about services in the summer will be forthcoming.

**Will students be eligible for compensatory services once schools reopen?**

The need for compensatory and/or additional services will be determined on a case by case basis once school reopens, based on individual student need. You may request an IEP team meeting to discuss this question once school resumes.

**I'm not sure if online learning is an option. What if my child needs something different?**

Remote learning is not necessarily online learning. Work with your child's teachers and liaison to develop learning opportunities that will work for you and your child.

**How much time should I expect will be allocated for instruction and services?**

In all, the state has recommended three hours of learning a day. This learning can take many forms, it may include phone calls and direct contact with teachers and related services providers or self-directed tasks like projects and independent practice.

**Can I record lessons?**

Please do not record online or telephone based lessons or therapies.

**How will my child's social/emotional needs be addressed during the closure?**

Work with your child's liaison for supports and lessons around social/emotional needs. In addition, guidance counselors are available for check-ins as needed, let one of your child's teachers know you need a call from a guidance counselor or call your child's school.

**IEP Questions/Answer**

**Is consent required to provide remote services and support?**

No. The MA Department of Secondary and Elementary Education has determined that consent is not required.

**Will the IEP team need to meet to amend the IEP during the closure?**

No. The DESE has determined there is no need to meet and amend services during the closure.

**Will regularly scheduled IEP meetings be held during this closure?**

ARRSD is developing protocols to hold IEP review team meetings during the closure. More on this will be coming. Meetings via phone are accessible currently, video conferencing is being pursued by the district. If you have an upcoming review team meeting, you should be hearing from your liaison soon to set up a date and time.

**Will transition and/or progress meetings be held during this closure?**

If your child has periodic progress meetings on their IEP, or has a major transition coming up, (like moving from 8th to 9th grade) meetings should be held. Please see question above for more details.

**Will remote learning model change the IEP or impact “stay put” rights?**

The closure will not change the IEP or impact “stay put” rights

**What if my child has Early Intervention services and will turn 3 during the closure?**

Your child is entitled to continuing services, provided remotely, during this closure. If your child turns three during the closure, please contact Amy Langdon, Early Childhood Director at [alangdon@arrsd.org](mailto:alangdon@arrsd.org); 978-249-2406 for more information.

**Additional Family Support**

You can reach out to the Athol/Royalston SEPAC by accessing their page on [arrsd.org](http://www.arrsd.org): <http://www.arrsd.org/ar-sepac/>

If you need further information about community supports, reach out to our Director of Guidance, Amanda Pagar-Wein at [apagarwein@arrsd.org](mailto:apagarwein@arrsd.org), or your child’s Principal or Guidance Counselor.

Best,

*Kate Clark*

Kathryn Clark, Pupil Services Director