Dear Students and Families,

We hope this letter finds you well. We are so happy to be welcoming back many of you to in-person hybrid learning beginning on March 15, 2021. As the excitement of the return day draws near - we have much information to share with you. Below you will find important information that will help guide you and our faculty to return to school and remain safe.

Hybrid Learning Model Schedule:

- **Hybrid Learning Model** - Monday - Thursday in person learning 8:00 a.m. - 2:pm. Fridays all students will remain in remote learning.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at roachj@worcesterschools.net or 774-696-2435

Sincerely,

Jerri Roach
Transition Program Coordinator

Please carefully read all of the important information below:
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Guiding Principles

Healthy Educational Environment
We will ensure that appropriate measures to protect the safety and health of our students and staff is a top priority by:

● providing clean and sanitized buildings
● investing in equipment to ensure air quality improvements and safety
● prioritizing COVID-19 mitigation training for staff and students and school routines have been designed to minimize risk

Robust Instructional Opportunities
We will provide high quality synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid instruction to students during remote and hybrid learning time by:

● ensuring students have access to a district issued device and internet
● modifying curriculum programs to support multiple learning models
● having continuous professional development integrating instructional technology
● providing modern research based learning platforms

Social Emotional Supports for Students
We are mindful of the pandemic’s impact on students and we are prioritizing student well-being through:

● biweekly student SEL and academic needs survey
● Specialized and individualized SEL support
● structured schedules with time for check-ins and small group supports

Equitable Learning Opportunities for Students
We will provide high quality learning for all students through:

● ensuring that Students with Disabilities receive appropriate support and instruction
● ensuring that English Language Learners receive appropriate support and instruction
● continuing to implement culturally responsive, learner-centered practices in all lessons
● providing varied accommodations in order to make learning accessible for all learners

Transparent Communication
We are committed to providing timely information to families and community members regarding the shifts and changes associated with COVID-19 school procedures through:

● frequent updates to the website with translated information
● leveraging multiple ways to communicate with families including community forums, ConnectEd messages, text message, phone calls, social media and website updates
WPS is working closely with the Parabola Project to offer guidance, tools, and strategies to understand and minimize risks while maximizing learning and wellness during COVID-19.

-Parabola Project

Student & Staff Safety

District Guidelines

- Staff will receive comprehensive safety trainings including the viewing of a four part school safety reopening video
- Students are requested to bring two masks to school each day
- Masks and gloves will be available upon requests for all staff and students
- Masks will be expected to be worn at all times, except during mask breaks
- Six feet of social distancing guidelines will be followed
- The number of people within a closed area will be limited to reduce exposure to Covid-19
- Transition and directional plans will be created for safe movements throughout the building
- Students and staff will be trained in hand washing
- Hand washing schedules will be created
- Hand sanitizers will be placed in every classroom and other key locations at all schools.
- Additional PPE and cleaning supplies will be available at our schools including masks disinfectant wipes, shields, gloves, hand sanitizer, and gowns for all needs

School Guidelines

| Masks and gloves are available. | Students should bring 2 masks daily. | Staff and students must wear a mask at all times. (exception only while eating and scheduled mask breaks) | Hand sanitizer dispensers can be found throughout our school. | Hand washing is vitally important. |
Proper social distancing

No social distancing - not safe

Classroom Setup

District Guidelines
- Desks and tables will be six feet apart and will face the same way
- Unused furniture may be removed to allow for more space
- Students will have seating assignments for contact tracing if necessary
- Signage of protocols will be posted

School Guidelines

Students will sit 6 feet apart

Student's won't work close together
School Supplies

District Guidelines
- Each student will have their own school supplies
- Personal belongings will be separated and not shared with others
- For shared supplies there will be a cleaning protocol for disinfecting between uses
- Lockers will not be used during this phase of reopening; coats and backpacks will be allowed in the classrooms
- Students will be required to bring their chargers, earbuds, and district issued device fully charged to school each day
- Students should not bring their hotspot into school
- Students will not be able to use a personal device in school

School Guidelines

| Student's will bring home their chromebook in a Computer Carry Case which will be provided. All student belongings will remain at their table during the day including coats, bags, etc. Students will be provided with a small covered bin where their school supplies will be kept on their table. | Chromebook travels to and from school daily. The chromebook should be fully charged each evening so students will be ready to begin learning upon arrival. | School provided headphones. | Chromebook charge must be brought to school each day in case the chromebook needs to be charged. |
Student Transitions

**District Guidelines**
- Signage will be posted throughout the entire building to direct students’ transition and maintain six feet distance.
- Hallways and stairways will be assigned as exit and/or entrance points to avoid students passing each other face to face and crowding.
- When students transition staff will monitor transition to ensure six feet distancing.

**School Guidelines**

| Students arrive and depart from the front entrance (students using wheelchairs access the back door for arrival and departure) | Follow the arrows on the floor for directions and traffic flow | Only two people on the elevator at one time | Stand on the blue X in the elevator |
**District Guidelines**

- All students/families should complete a symptom self check via the health portal daily before leaving for school.
- Arrival will have staggered times to avoid large groups entering the building at the same time.
- Social distancing will be maintained while entering the building with staff monitoring.
- Students will go directly to classrooms when entering the building.

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<th>Arrival is at the front entrance to the building, unless you arrive on a wheelchair bus (back door)</th>
<th>Arrival time is 8:00 a.m.</th>
<th>Take elevator directly to 3rd floor. Stand on the blue X. Only 2 people on the elevator.</th>
<th>Or you can use the stairs and follow the arrows up to the 3rd floor.</th>
<th>Remember to keep 6ft distance even when with your classmates.</th>
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As you enter the building staff will direct you to use hand sanitizer.
Dismissal

District Guidelines
- Staff and students must maintain social distancing when preparing for dismissal
- Dismissal time will be staggered to avoid large groups exiting the building
- Students and staff must wear masks during the entire dismissal process
- Students walking home should maintain social distancing and mask wearing

School Guidelines

| Student’s will remain in their classroom and will be dismissed once their van is ready. Staff will monitor end of the day departures closely. |
| Follow the arrows down to the first floor. Exit the front door only. |

Breakfast and Lunch

District Guidelines
- All water bubblers and fountains will be shut off
- Food service will be providing water during the school day
- Breakfast will be grab and go or delivered to the classroom
- Lunch will be eaten in spaces designated by the principal
- Students will maintain six feet distancing while eating

School Guidelines
- Student will eat breakfast in their classrooms
- Based on assignments students may eat lunch in their classroom or the cafeteria
- Some water is to be provided by the nutrition department, and students may also bring some from home
Wash hands before and after breakfast and lunch

**Mask Breaks**

**District Guidelines**
- There will be scheduled mask breaks for students
- The breaks will be based on the students' age and needs
- Masks breaks will be conducted outside whenever possible

**School Guidelines**

Scheduled mask breaks, based on the needs of each student, will be provided.
**Hand Washing**

**District Guidelines**
- Students and staff will be required to wash their hands frequently
- Hand washing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds is the recommendation
- Hand sanitizer will be available in every school

**School Guidelines**

**Bathroom Procedures**

**District Guidelines**
- Safety protocols will be established at schools based on bathroom location and capacity
- Bathroom breaks will be carried out as they would during normal school times
- Students waiting for the bathrooms will be six feet apart and wear masks
- Signages will be posted to remind students to wash their hands
- Soap dispensers will be filled on a regular basis

**School Guidelines**
School & Systemwide Staff Protocols

District Guidelines

- All school based and systemwide staff will be required to sign in at a designated area
- When visiting school buildings, masks will be worn by all staff and social distancing will be maintained
- Work spaces in the building may be utilized for specialized instruction
- Staff meetings will be held virtually
- Professional development will be held virtually

School Guidelines

Sign-in upon arrival using the existing google form

Visitor Access to the Building

District Guidelines

- Visitors should call ahead and arrange a time to come into the building
- Visitors will be required to sign in with their name, purpose, and phone number
- Visitors must wear masks at all times
- Visitors must maintain six feet social distance upon entering the school
- Only one visitor at a time will be allowed in the office
- Staff will assist visitors in their needs
- There will be no visitors volunteering in classrooms

School Guidelines

- Whenever possible visitors should call ahead to schedule a visit.
- All visitors must sign-in at the front desk in the main lobby on the 1st floor.
- We will be notified of your arrival.
Decisions about when and how to reopen schools during COVID-19 need to be based on a strong set of principles, grounded in best available evidence, informed by context, and oriented towards each community’s highest aspirations for student learning and well being.

-Parabola Project

Air Quality and Cleaning Protocol

District Guidelines
- We upgraded all of the buildings to improve air flow
- HVAC assessments were conducted in 59 locations
- Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization systems were installed in all locations to improve air quality
- Misting machines have been purchased for all schools and will be used each night
- Custodians will clean rooms, empty trash, and disinfect high touch points regularly
- Each classroom will be provided with disinfectant wipes to use on desks and materials for frequent washing; the wipes are made from the safest disinfectant available on the market approved by EPA for Covid-19
- Hand sanitizer has been purchased for all schools and will be replenished when needed

School Guidelines

Each Classroom and space has been equipped with an air ventilation machine which maintains proper air flow and quality for safety
Transportation

District Guidelines

- Students must maintain six feet distance while waiting and boarding the bus
- Students should face forward at all times and refrain from eating, singing, shouting, or sharing items while in transit
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected between all runs
- Windows will stay open for the duration of the ride
- Students, drivers, and monitors must wear masks at all times
- Seating plans for all students will be made for each bus route in accordance with DESE Transportation Guidelines
- Students will be assigned seats and will be required to stay in them

School Guidelines

On the van or bus:

- Only 2 students on a van
- Assigned seats
- 1st student entering the van will sit in the very back row behind the driver
- 2nd student that gets picked up would then sit in the seat that is diagonal in the 2nd row
- Students need to wear masks at all times in the van
- If there are any medical issues where a student would be unable to wear a mask please let us know in advance if possible
- Students should plan to dress warm in these colder months as the windows will be cracked open to maintain airflow
- Drivers will put the heat on for the students but students should still dress warm
- Vans get disinfected after every pick-up and drop-off tier, and are also thoroughly deep-cleaned once a week in a multi-step process
On the bus:

- Number of students will be limited on each bus
- Students will have assigned seating areas
- If there are any medical issues where a student would be unable to wear a mask please let us know in advance if possible
- Students should plan to dress warm in these colder months as the windows will be cracked open to maintain airflow
- Drivers will put the heat on for the students but students should still dress warm
- The bus gets disinfected after every pick-up and drop-off tier, and are also thoroughly deep-cleaned once a week in a multi-step process

Food Services for Families

District Guidelines
- School-wide food services will continue for all families
- Breakfast and lunch will be served in school to all students
- Breakfast and lunch will be grab and go style
- Food Trucks and food pantries will be ongoing throughout the city

Covid-19 Medical Waiting Room & Nurse’s Office

District Guidelines
- WPS will clearly distinguish between the Nurses’ Office and a Covid-19 safe space
- All schools will have an established Covid-19 medical waiting room separate from the nurse’s office
- The Covid-19 medical room will be used for students presenting with Covid-19 symptoms
- Every school will have a nurse and a Covid-19 point person
- There will be disinfection after each student who visits the nurse’s office

School Guidelines

Designated Medical Waiting Area

Nurse's Office
**Students and Staff Exhibiting Symptoms**

**District Guidelines**
- We will respond promptly and effectively when there is possible exposure to Covid-19
- An individual who is symptomatic at home should stay home and get tested
- If a student or staff member is positive, notify the building principal
- If a student is Covid-19 positive, home with symptoms, or quarantining, they can participate in remote learning
- A student that is symptomatic on the bus will immediately be brought to the nurse’s office or the Covid-19 medical waiting room for assessment
- A student that is symptomatic while in school will wait in the Covid-19 waiting room until they can be picked up
- Symptomatic students will require a pickup and will not be allowed to ride the bus home
- A staff member who appears symptomatic at work will discuss coverage with the principal and follow district protocols
- A student or staff member who tests positive must notify the school, assist with the district procedures on close contact and covid-19 positive status procedures, and follow CDC guidelines for quarantining or isolation

**Protocols for Potential School Closures**

**District Guidelines**
In the event of multiple cases of Covid-19 in the school or building, we will:
- consult with Worcester Regional Dept. Public Health Department
- review of the specific COVID-19 public health metrics for the city of Worcester
- determine if it is necessary to shut down a classroom, wing, or entire building for a short time by consulting with necessary stakeholders and WPS administration for a final decision
- inform the community
- communicate building reopening plan

**District Contacts**

Superintendent: Maureen Binienda- 508-799-3117

Deputy Superintendent: Sue O’Neil-508-799-3644

School Safety Director, Covid-19 District Coordinator: Rob Pezzella-508-799-3472

Chief Financial and Operations Officer: Brian Allen-508-799-3401

Elementary Schools Managers: Marie Morse, Ellen Kelley-508-799-3264

Planning for these guidelines were created in collaboration with the Parabola Project:
http://parabolaprox.org

- DESE Guidance on Remote Learning for English Learners (Released April 24, 2020)
- Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance (Released June 25, 2020)
- Guidance on Fall 2020 Special Education Services (Released July 9, 2020)
- Fall Reopening - - FAQs (Released July 10, 2020)
- Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance (Released July 22, 2020)
- Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance (Released July 22, 2020)
- Fall Remote Learning Guidance (Released July 24, 2020)
- Guidance for Courses with Additional Safety Requirements (Released July 24, 2020)