



# Ipswich Public Schools

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Dear Ipswich community,

As promised, here is another update on our school closings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This update contains important information regarding food services during the closure, building access, the last day of school, educational resources for your use, and social distancing. Certainly we are in uncharted territory and we are all cognizant of what our closure means to the Ipswich community.

Beginning on Wednesday, all Ipswich Public Schools will be closed to the general public. Students, parents and faculty will not be allowed to enter the buildings. Office staff will be working remotely, but may enter their offices periodically. I am asking all staff members to check their email on a daily basis and respond to anything they would normally respond to.

## **Food Services**

The Food Service Department will be providing breakfast and lunch “grab and go” bags for any students who need them beginning tomorrow from 11:30 - 12:30. Deliveries will be made to the following locations: Agawam Village, the Winthrop School, and Rosewood Drive. This program will continue each weekday for the next three weeks.

## **All Buildings Closed and Events and Meetings Cancelled**

All buildings will be closed as of Wednesday to the public and no entry will be allowed. It is critical for the disinfection protocols that we are implementing to be successful that no one enters the buildings until school resumes. All school events are cancelled and all meetings including staff meetings, professional development, student conferences, and IEP Team meetings are cancelled or postponed. School Committee and Subcommittee meetings may still take place remotely with dial in access for citizens. The meetings will be posted accordingly.

## **Educational Resources/Website**

The teaching staff are busy putting together a website with lists of resources by grade level that can be used by parents and students during our school closure. It will have suggestions for readings, activities, websites, etc. The material provided is for enrichment purposes only and will not be graded by teachers. The idea here is to keep the students engaged and excited about learning. Please understand that our teachers are home with their families in similar situations and cannot be expected to deliver 1:1 virtual instruction to students. I will be sending out the link to the resources by Wednesday of this week.

### **Last Day of School and Graduation**

The Commissioner of Education has amended the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's rules so that no school will need to make up closed days beyond the 185th day on the school calendar. The last day for students is scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 2020 as noted on our 2019 -2020 School Year Calendar. At this time, there is no plan to change the graduation date for Seniors

### **Reminder of Purpose**

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, please remember that the purpose of this closing is to protect our students and families, faculty and staff, and the community at large. Closing our schools is only a part of the broader solution to prevent community spread of this virus. If we continue to meet together in groups outside of school, this initial closure will not have the desired impact. It is critical that everyone refrain from meeting in large groups and that we practice social distancing as recommended by the CDC.

Maintaining social distance is different than self-quarantine. Self-quarantine means remaining in your home. Social distancing means staying approximately 6 feet away from others. You may be able to go for a run, hike in the woods, play in the yard or driveway, have a Skype visit, but not have a group sleepover or multi-person playdate. We need families to make responsible decisions. While the schools are closed for three weeks, we strongly urge parents to supervise their children and ensure they are not participating in group activities. Necessary life activities may be accomplished, e.g. grocery shopping, doctor's appointments. Large group gatherings are to be avoided at this time, in other words, you should not attend any gathering where you cannot practice social distancing (approximately 6 feet between persons).

Thank you for your continued patience as we work through these issues. I will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available. Should you have any questions or additional concerns, please contact me or your building principal.

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