Ipswich School Committee



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Message from School Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Chub Whitten and Carl Nylen

The Ipswich School Committee looks forward to the return of students to our buildings beginning Monday, September 14. As a Commonwealth and as a community, we have flattened the curve, kept our positivity rates low, and implemented a broad range of health and safety measures so that we may now provide our students with the structure of in-person learning and engagement. We would like to thank our entire Ipswich community for making the hybrid reopening a reality: the amount of collaboration, hard work, and creative thinking required has been truly inspirational. It also would not have been possible without the phenomenal support of the Ipswich Educators Association who negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the School Committee. Please join us in thanking the IEA for their commitment. The MOU, which was ratified by the IEA with the approval of 97% of votes cast, is posted on the <u>District website</u> for your reference.

Education will have a very different look this fall, full of compromises, adjustments, and varying blends of in-person and remote learning. It will probably feel strange at first, or disjointed: after years of encouraging teamwork, small groups, student collaboration, and other innovative learning practices, we now find ourselves pivoting to an entirely different set of teaching and learning methods. Will it be perfect? No. Will we be persistent in our goal to provide an outstanding educational experience? Yes. This pandemic has not been equitable to all of us. Our prioritizations must be to foster those vital student-teacher connections, address achievement gaps, give extra support to our highest needs children, provide much-needed social interaction, and bolster social-emotional wellness.

We are so appreciative that our teachers and staff have been leaning in and working together to make September 14 a reality for our kids, and have been more than impressed at how hard everyone has been working for this Commonwealth in our community. We will cherish this school year as a true example of collective effort.

Thank you, and welcome back.

Chub Whitten Chair Carl Nylen Vice Chair

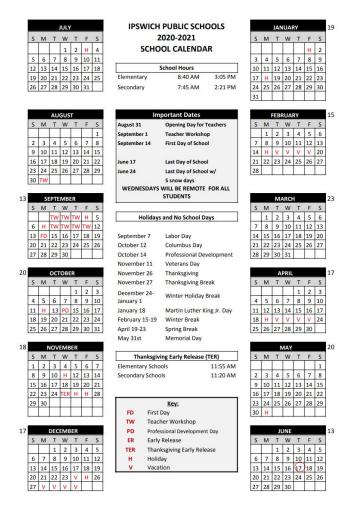
Updates: Return to Learn 2020

Updates to the District's Return to Learn Plan will be published this week to reflect recent changes and revised guidance from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the MA Department of Public Health. Visit <u>www.ipsk12.net</u> and our Return to Learn 2020 website at <u>https://sites.google.com/ipsk12.net/ipswichpublicschools/home</u> to view the plan, school calendar, food services, transportation, public health updates, technology assistance, and more.

School Calendar

The first day of school for students is Monday, September 14. Students in Cohort A will attend in-person, and students in Cohort B will attend remotely. Thursdays will not be early release days this school year.

Specific information about student schedules, remote learning, arrivals/dismissals, attendance, and health/safety protocols are being sent to all families by each school building. Please contact your building principal if you have any questions about your student's first week schedule. As a reminder, school grounds are closed to public use during school day hours.



Health and Safety

The single most important thing to do if you or your child is exhibiting common symptoms of COVID-19 is to **stay home**. Our collective health relies, in part, on individual attention and responsibility. Although some symptoms of COVID-19 are the same as the flu or a cold, when in doubt, stay home.

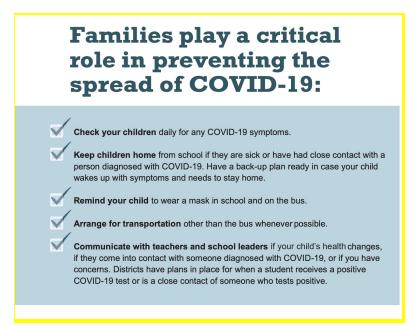
Below is the full list of symptoms for which caregivers should monitor their children, and staff should monitor themselves:

- □ Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- □ Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- □ Headache when in combination with other symptoms
- □ Muscle aches or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- □ Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- □ Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when

in combination with other symptoms

If staff or students have any of these symptoms, they must get tested for active COVID-19 infection prior to returning to school.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has launched a website, **Returning to School Safely Together**, for families and caregivers. It includes information from doctors, school reopening guidelines, frequently asked questions and answers, and an option to email with questions or concerns: <u>http://www.doe.mass.edu/backtoschool/</u>



Face Coverings

All individuals in school buildings, on school grounds, and on school transportation must wear a well-fitted face covering that covers the mouth, nose, and chin (no single-layer masks, gaiters, bandanas, valves, or buffs). Please read the face covering policy on our District website, https://www.ipsk12.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=1418&dataid=3426&FileName=EBCFA_%20Face%20Coverings%20.pdf.

Bus Routes

Transportation routes are currently being finalized and will be posted as soon as possible on the District's website, <u>www.ipsk12.net</u>. Because of the required health and safety protocols, such as assigning bus seats, any new requests for regular bus transportation will be placed on a wait list which you can find here: <u>https://www.ipsk12.net/domain/47</u>. Thank you for your patience as we work to accommodate the transportation needs of our students.

Food Service

Meals will continue to be offered this year to all students. Students who are in school will be able to order meals either online or in the classroom, and students who are learning remotely will be provided packaged meals by delivery/pickup as has been done since March. The USDA has extended the Free Meal program through December 31, 2020 to provide all children with access to nutritious food.

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