

Agawam Public Schools

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: March 25, 2020

Agawam Public Schools is enacting a closure of school from March 16th - May 4, 2020 and school-related activities.

The information detailed in this document is intended to provide guidance for this period. It is important to note that this is a fluid situation and so this document will be regularly updated and modified and it is recommended that you revisit frequently for the latest updates and information.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Student Learning

Q.	Are the days during the three week closure counted as “school days?”
A.	No. These are non-school days. Massachusetts schools are now closed until May 4, 2020. The district will be providing more information regarding our distant learning plan not that the school closure has been extended. It is important to note that the school year will not extend beyond the 185th day (June 25, 2020)
Q.	Are there expectations around Distance and Online Learning Expectations for Students or Teachers?

<p>A.</p>	<p>Agawam is following guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). DESE recommends school districts provide students and families with opportunities for enrichment and socialization during the closure. At this time, DESE has discouraged districts from attempting to replicate the school day in a virtual environment and from assigning traditional grades to assignments. Instead, DESE has suggested districts develop academic enrichment activities and opportunities for socialization that include contact with educators and other students and feedback on student work.</p> <p>Although assignments are not being graded at this time, this is subject to change based on guidance from DESE. Teachers are purposefully designing learning activities that will help students maintain and improve their academic skills and that are linked to work students will be asked to do when they return to school.</p> <p>In Agawam, we are greatly concerned students will choose not to engage in these learning activities and will fall behind others academically. Student participation is expected and is of great importance for their success. Regular and frequent practice and active participation (in academic and social emotional learning activities) and reviewing content is critical in order to try to minimize the impact our time out of the classroom will have upon students' return to school. If families elect to not have students engage during this time, upon students' return, parents should expect that there could possibly be a negative impact for their student that is not universally found for those who engaged.</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 here.</p> <p>We are encouraging all staff to utilize the resources we have in the district to help facilitate distance learning. This includes the use of Google Apps and Google Classroom. These are the most widely available and accessible tools in the district. Your school leaders will be providing additional resources through a Shared Google Drive called "Distance Learning."</p> <p>For students that do not have access to a device or the internet, the district will be providing options to parents and students. Multiple emails and phone calls have gone out to all students and parents with ways to request a device for home use and ways to get internet connection. At this point, we are asking families to contact the school that their child attends to see if devices are still available.</p> <p>For staff that require a device to use at home, please click the following link; https://forms.gle/WxhALvKrapccM79X9</p> <p>We will be providing access to devices to the best of our abilities. The most common device we have available is the Chromebook.</p> <p>We have made Google Hangouts and Google Meet available for everyone with an @agawamed.org account. This will allow additional resources for teachers and students to interact and provide virtual classroom experiences.</p> <p>If you have any questions about software that can be used with our students, please contact the IT department via the support desk. We are trying to consolidate technology resources to not overwhelm students with links and logins.</p>

	<p>The Technology Support System will remain open through any school closures. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to support@agawamed.org with technology related questions.</p> <p>https://tech.agawamed.org/announcements/distance-learning-updates/</p>
Q.	Given a three week closure, what happens with the MCAS test for students?
A.	At this time we will not be in school during the previously scheduled MCAS window. We expect to hear more from DESE in the near future on this topic as many schools are in the same position. At this time, the ELA MCAS tests are postponed.
Q.	What is going to happen in regards to graduation?
A.	As this situation is ever changing we will have to wait to make decisions based on the directions provided by the state.
Q.	What are my responsibilities as a special education teacher/related service provider, for the students on my caseload during this three week closure?
A.	<p>Special Education teachers and related service providers should be checking with families to be sure that students can access and engage in the activities that have been provided by their general education and special education teachers. You should use your professional judgment and your knowledge of your students to determine the frequency for which these check ins should occur. For some students, once per week might be appropriate, and for other students, checking in more frequently might be warranted. Special Education teachers also are working with general education teachers and are connected to Google classroom. They continue to be a resource for the students with whom they work and have reached out to those students and families. Special education teachers should be monitoring the virtual classrooms and can give students direction and feedback on how to access them.</p> <p>If you feel as though you need guidance on this, please consult with Antonio Fazio, Director of Special Education at afazio@agawamed.org or Erin Walsh, Supervisor of Special Services at ewalsh@agawamed.org.</p> <p>The 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 paperwork, IEP writing, etc, so that these are all set to be sent out upon re-opening of the district.</p>
Q.	I am a related service provider to students on an IEP. What are my responsibilities during this three week closure?
A.	The expectation is that you provide suggested activities that can be done at home for your students, and share this with them through checking in with families. This can be

done either by phone or through email.

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Frequently Asked Questions Special Education

Q.	My child is on an IEP and receives “services only” (i.e. speech/Language counseling etc.). 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.
Q.	Will my child’s special education liaison, related service provider, and Director of Special Education be available if I have a question during this three week closure?
A.	Yes, special education teachers, related services providers, Supervisor of Special Services and the Director of Special Education will be available to assist with specific questions as needed. The best way to contact them is through email, as most staff will be working remotely. You can expect a “check in” from your child’s liaison, in the form of a phone call or email during this time as well.
Q.	I have made a request for an Initial Evaluation on or after March 16th. What should I expect?
A.	Agawam Public Schools, along with other schools in the Commonwealth, are temporarily halting initial evaluations, re-evaluations, annual reviews, and plan distribution timelines for all students with IEPs and 504s during school closure. This means that as soon as schools open again, the timelines will commence as is required and agreed upon by state and federal regulations.
Q.	Will virtual IEP meetings be held during the school closure?
A.	Agawam Public Schools will not be conducting virtual IEP or 504 meetings at this time. If we remain closed beyond April 6th, this decision will be re-examined.
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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. After much discussion, the [MIAA BOD](#) decided to **delay the start of the 2020 spring season to April 29, 2020**. Respecting the fluidity of this situation, this decision will be revisited prior to April 29, 2020.

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Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions

Q.	How will the days of a three week closure count against school days?
A.	Agawam Public Schools will be in school through June 25, 2020 which is our regularly scheduled 185th day.
Q.	Currently the schools are closed through April 6, 2020. Will this be extended? How will we be notified?
A.	The Agawam Public School District will continue to monitor this fluid situation and will make the best determinations in the best interest of the students and staff. Information will continue to be provided on our website, through email, and on all major news outlets.
Q.	What will happen to April vacation (April 20-24)?
A.	At this time the April vacation week is scheduled as planned. However, given these unexpected school closures we may revisit the need for additional school days and this will be revisited in the near future with all impacted employees.
Q.	Will there be access to any school buildings during the March 17 - April 6, 2020 closure?
A.	At this time all buildings are closed and after that only essential personnel will have access.
Q.	Are there resources available if our children need mental health services or are experiencing some anxiety?
A.	Please visit our mental health and well being site for more resources and activities. https://sites.google.com/view/agawamsmentalhealthwellbeingre/home
Q.	How do I build routines at home while schools are closed?
A.	Start by bringing your family together (if you have older students) and asking what they would like to do during this period of social distancing. From those conversations you may work in a time to learn how to play a game that has been sitting on a shelf or read a book together. For younger students, use what you know about their interests to build routines. Simple routines will make the world seem more predictable for young and old alike.

Q.	What things do we have around the house that can be helpful in supporting routines?
A.	<p>Microwave timers can be helpful in order to support younger students in seeing how much time until Mom or Dad is done with their work call. You can also say something to the effect, "After this one TV show we can play the game you like."</p> <p>A family calendar can help support a simple routine. Each day could include a family activity that can be noted to take place after dinner, for example. This gives everyone something to look forward to.</p>
Q.	Will food services be available for students that qualify for free and reduced lunch?
A.	Grab and Go lunches are available every weekday from 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. at the front entrance of the Junior High School.
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Q.	Should everyone be practicing social distancing?
A.	Yes. "Now, we ask that you do your part. Creating social gatherings during the school outage will minimize 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 "
Q.	How do I contact the Department of Public Health?
A.	<i>413-786-0400 ext, 8721</i>
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