



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

EMILY J. PARKS
Superintendent of Schools

COVID-19 UPDATE FOR FAMILIES

March 15, 2020

Dear Westwood Families:

The Governor announced tonight that all schools in Massachusetts will be closed until Tuesday, April 7th. My superintendent colleagues and I believe that this is the right decision. Though school closure is very challenging and has significant impacts, we believe that this step is important for “flattening the curve” and slowing down the spread of COVID-19.

The governor clearly communicated that this strategy will only be effective if during the closure we all do our best to [socially distance](#). As the mayor of Boston said this afternoon, “Keeping social distance is an act of solidarity right now. It’s about thinking of others.” This is a message that the adults in the community will have to both model and explain to our children. I recognize firsthand that having students at home while also managing our work responsibilities is very challenging. The challenge is even greater when the experts are suggesting that we avoid gatherings, stay out of public spaces, and cancel play dates. I hope, however, that in Westwood we can rally as a community around this important action step. This is how we will protect our older population and our neighbors with health challenges, slow down the spread of the virus, and ensure that our healthcare system does not become overwhelmed. We are actively thinking of ways that the schools can be helpful in creating a sense of connectedness, while physically distant, among students and their teachers over the coming weeks.

What are the next steps for the Westwood Public Schools?

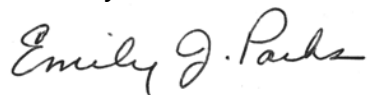
Over the next couple of days, the district will be continuing its planning for keeping learning alive during the closure. Those plans will be informed by guidance that we expect soon from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about expectations for distance learning and regulatory requirements. We will have more specific details for you by midweek.

We can foreshadow for you that on Wednesday we will have a plan in place for “rolling car lines” for students in grades 3 through 5 to pick up a Chromebook and a charger and for students in all grades to pick up musical instruments. We will communicate again when details are finalized.

Tomorrow, we will send out some suggestions for ways that students can review, practice, stay busy and keep their learning going outside of school. In the meantime, reading a good book is always a great idea!

We appreciate your patience and your staying positive as we work through this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily J. Parks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "E" and "P".

Emily J. Parks
Superintendent