



**The Public Schools of  
Brookline, Massachusetts**

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## **Frequently Asked Questions for Special Education**

### **Liaison**

**1. Who should I contact if I have a question about my child's services?**

You should contact your child's liaison. If you are not sure who your liaison is please contact your building Educational Team Facilitator (ETF). The list can be found [here](#).

### **IEP Services**

**1. During the period of time a district is closed related to COVID-19, must the district provide special education services to students with disabilities?**

Schools may not be able to provide all services in the manner they are typically provided according to students' IEPs. The United States Department of Education (USED) has stated that during this national emergency "school districts must provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students."

The provision of FAPE may include special education and related services provided remotely. PSB will provide:

- Resources and support such as strategies, projects and packets provided to students
- Regular and ongoing communication from special education team members); and
- Services and instruction such as remote learning, by email, through a virtual platform,, or telephonic instruction.

**2. What will remote special education services look like?**

Remote special education services may include self-directed activities, teacher- directed lessons, and consultation/collaboration. Examples of these models include: supports and resources provided by special education staff to students and families: audio

instruction/therapy; pre-recorded lessons, small group remote instruction; parent/guardian consultation; or special educators, general educators, and related service providers collaborating in order to receive feedback about student functioning and well-being.

**3. Will the special educator and related service provider match the frequency and duration of services as provided in the IEP?**

In light of the laws and existing guidance, as well as practical considerations, we will provide special education supports, services, accommodations, and modifications to students during the school closures to the extent that it is safe and feasible. During this national emergency, we will not be able to provide services in the same manner that your children received them in the past, but we will do our best to work with our families. One-to-one services will not be provided to the extent and as they had been prior to school closure.

Providers will recommend activities or resources that the student can do with home support. They will check in with students, parents, and caregivers to offer support and assistance with accessing the resources and activities.

**4. How will Extended School Year (ESY) services be addressed?**

Registration letters are being sent out the week of April 13th to those families whose students currently have ESY recommended on their IEP. Dates of ESY may change due to the current pandemic and we will update families as soon as final decisions are made.

**5. Are all students eligible for compensatory services following these extended closures?**

It depends. Whether a student is entitled to receive compensatory services because of the school's closure is an individualized determination that will be made by the IEP team. It is in everyone's best interest to continue to provide our students with disabilities with related services to the extent feasible. This approach is the most effective way to mitigate students' needing additional service when this period of school closure ends. If, due to the unprecedented circumstances, we are not able to provide sufficient services in order to offer students with disabilities a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE); we will then consider, on an individual basis, what compensatory services are required.

**6. Can I record the lessons?**

Please do not record the online or telephone-based lessons/therapies.

**7. How will my child's social-emotional and/or behavioral needs be addressed during**

**this time?**

Your child's liaison will be able to direct you to any school-based supports your child may need regarding social-emotional/behavioral challenges. Additional resources can be found at the PSB Counseling [site](#) or [here](#).

**8. If my child is in severe distress/becomes violent what can I do? Is the BEST Team still available to families?**

The Boston Emergency Services Team (B.E.S.T.) has a 24/7 Call Center (1-800-981-HELP (4357)) that is staffed by master's level clinicians who will triage calls, provide support, make appropriate referrals via phone and/or arrange for in-person evaluations. It also has a mobile crisis team/intervention that provides 24-hour response to adults and youth in the need of crisis intervention.

**9. Will my child have contact with their teachers and service providers every week?**

Yes. Special education providers will be in touch with students and/or families each week through a variety of modalities.

**IEPs and Meetings**

**1. Is consent required to provide support and services remotely?**

No. According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), consent is not required.

**2. Will the Team reconvene to make changes to the IEP to reflect this remote service delivery?**

No. DESE has shared that there is no need to reconvene the Team and make changes to the IEP to reflect how service is provided during the school closure.

**3. Will the remote learning service delivery models change the IEP or impact "stay put" rights?**

No. Remote learning does not change the IEP or impact "stay put" rights.

**4. Will PSB hold IEP meetings during the emergency closure?**

Yes. PSB will begin to schedule virtual IEP meetings toward the end of April. In the short term, our priority is to maintain connections with students and provide support, then we will begin scheduling IEP meetings. We will prioritize the meetings while some meetings may need to be scheduled once school resumes.

**5. Are timelines for IEP meetings and evaluations in effect during the school closure?**

Yes. However, in cases where PSB may not be able to meet the deadline for an IEP meeting or completion of an evaluation, we will reach out to families regarding the

possibility of extending timelines. In response to this outreach, parents and guardians may agree to an extension of the timelines. Parental consent to an extension of timelines can be made via email, U.S. mail, voicemail, a phone call, or a text. Consent provided via voicemail, a phone call, or a text will be followed up by written confirmation from PSB. When there is agreement between PSB and a family to extend a timeline, PSB will provide written documentation to the family that outlines the reason for the extension and the revised timeline.

### **Technology**

**1. Are the online platforms (i.e. Google Meet) secure?**

Google Meet provides a more secure educational environment within the PSB GSuite for Education Domain. This means PSB has control over the accounts as well as very granular logging to protect our students. Google Meet, being within the GSuite environment, provides a familiar user interface for both staff and students with minimal training required vs. introducing a new tool.

**2. My child still does not have a device or hotspot. How will he/she/they receive this?**

If your student does not have a device please contact your ETF or liaison. If you do not have internet access please note that there are options available through the [Digital Access National Program](#).

### **Additional Parent Support**

**1. Is there a support group I can join or a way I can connect with other families with children in special education to share and learn about resources during this time?**

For more information about groups and networking with other families, please contact our SEPAC via [info@brooklinesepac.org](mailto:info@brooklinesepac.org).

### **District Resources for Parents to Use at Home**

To access resources suggested by the district, please visit the [Special Education and Student Services web page](#) of the PSB website, as well as [Extended Learning for PSB Families](#) and [Guidance on Remote Learning for Families](#).