

Questions and Answers regarding the district's response to COVID-19

Teachers, principals and administrators in the West Seneca Central School District have been working diligently to prepare materials for weeks of distance learning for all students. This complicated task will take time and patience as they continue to gather resources and develop detailed plans.

As they are currently dealing with a high volume of requests, educators will respond to students and parents by email as soon as possible. Contact your child's teacher or building principal with specific questions about learning materials and learning at home starting Monday, March 23.

March 20, 2020

Please note: We will continue to update these questions as necessary. All answers are subject to change.

Educational materials

My child did not come home with learning materials. When will they receive them?

While many teachers have already begun contacting students, this effort will begin on a larger scale beginning the week of Monday, March 23 through a variety of digital venues (e.g. email, Google Classroom, the teacher webpages, etc.). Teachers and administrators are currently identifying and developing resources for student learning. Visit our website <https://www.wscschools.org/go> to access online learning resources.

How will students receive learning materials, especially those that were not in school Friday when packets were sent home?

If your child was unable to receive his/her learning materials that were sent home on Friday March 13, contact your child's principal to arrange for a time.

My child needs to retrieve a book/binder/notebook from their locker. Can we go get it?

At this time the school buildings are not open to the public.

Learning from home

My child does not learn well in a home setting and is resisting working from home. What should I do?

These are indeed challenging times, but there is much we can do to help our children while they are at home continuing their education.

Setting a school day schedule will help your child to maintain a structured school routine while at home. Setting aside specific times for learning will be helpful. Schedule in some breaks and a time for lunch as well, and communicate what the expectations are for your child. Most importantly, plan a routine you are able to maintain and manage from home.

My child is very concerned about falling behind. What can I do to support them?

As long as your child keeps up with the assignments/activities their teacher is providing to him/her, they will be on pace with their learning. Establishing regular, consistent routines, would be helpful for your child during this time. Establishing set time(s) during which he or she will complete their work will help maintain a sense of routine and structure for learning.

Can I get materials for what my child would have learned in school during this time? They came home with only review materials. I'm worried they will fall behind the curriculum.

Our teachers will be reaching out to their students on a regular basis beginning the week of March 23rd using a variety of modalities, i.e., Google, Remind, DoJo, etc. In addition, our website has a variety of resources available to our students during this time of school closure. Should you not have access to technology or the internet, please contact your child's building principal to arrange for the delivery of classroom materials.

My student is a junior/senior preparing for college. How will this affect their future plans?

Students should continue to follow the same protocol as our other students. This includes continuing to work with their teachers, completing assignments that are provided to them on a weekly basis, and seeking additional opportunities for enriching their learning..

Regarding any preparation for college, such as the SAT administrations, they can continue to practice and visit The College Board website for additional information and resources.

As you are aware, our area colleges and universities are also closed during this time. As such, they too, are sensitive to the current health crisis and will likely take steps to support their students, including those who will begin their studies in the fall.

What are you doing for children who receive PT/OT/ST?

Our district occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, physical therapists, physical therapy assistants and speech pathologists are providing activities that are appropriate for the home and will connect with students/families throughout the week. Please contact your child's therapist and/or teacher.

Are students with special needs going to receive therapy during the closure?

Our goal is to help students stay engaged in the educational process during this unprecedented time of school closure. We will need to demonstrate flexibility and support to our students, and support one another in doing so as well as we are considering everyone's health and safety at this time. Therefore, all services are postponed at this time.

Meal distribution

Is the lunch program only for children who already receive free or reduced meals?

No, meals are being provided to any child in need age 18 and younger. No eligibility requirements must be met.

If my child is in UPK are they eligible?

Yes, meals are being provided to any child in need age 18 and younger. No eligibility requirements must be met.

Are meals available for elderly residents?

No, the meals being provided are for students in need age 18 and younger. Adults in need of food may call the “211 Hotline”. This service can connect individuals to health and human services agencies.

Do I have to bring my children with me?

No, you do not need to bring children to pick up meals.

Do I need proof that my children attend West Seneca schools?

No, you do not need to provide proof your children attend West Seneca schools.

Can I pick up food for children other than my own in my family or neighborhood?

Yes, you may pick up meals for children other than your own, within reason. The district reserves the right to limit the number of meals each person may take from the drive-up meal distribution service.

How can I get meals if I do not have transportation?

Contact the district to make arrangements for meal pick-up, 677-3810.

Does the district need help with handing out meals?

Thank you for asking but no, district staff will be distributing meals directly to vehicles as a drive-thru to limit contact.

Do I just pull up to the school?

Yes, drive up to the front entrance from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and a district staff member will provide you with meals to go.

What if it's raining?

District staff will still be there to provide meals and will do their best in any inclement weather.

What if my child has a peanut/tree nut allergy?

Please contact the Food Services Department at 677-3810 if you have special dietary requirements.

Childcare**Why is this only being provided to first responders/medical workers?**

The district is providing this free service based on an executive order from Gov. Andrew Cuomo stating that school districts need to prioritize child care services for the children of medical professionals and first responders.

Why are we allowing children to be in a daycare group when health officials are telling us to advise social distancing guidelines?

Children will not be in a large group. There are very limited spots available and the children who are accepted will be spread out among several workers.

I paid ahead for the Before and After School program and need the money to pay bills. How can I get a refund?

Contact Stephanie Wright at swright@wscschools.org.

Will refunds be issued from the Before and After School Program to parents who paid ahead?

Refunds will be processed and sent to each family that has paid in advance for their child's Before and After School program.

Exams

Will the SAT be rescheduled? Will I be refunded for the canceled SAT?

According to The College Board, "In response to the rapidly evolving situation around the coronavirus, College Board is cancelling the May 2, 2020 SAT and SAT Subject Test administration. Make-up exams for the March 14th administration (scheduled for March 28) are also canceled.

Students who already registered for May, whose March test centers were closed, or who do not receive March scores because of any irregularities will receive refunds.

In the coming days, College Board will share additional information and details directly with registered students and test centers.

College Board will provide future additional SAT testing opportunities for students as soon as possible in place of canceled administrations. We'll be as flexible as possible to give students the best chance to show their skills and stay on the path to college."

We recommend you visit The College Board frequently for updates at collegeboard.org

Will state exams be rescheduled? How can I help my child prepare for these exams from home?

As of now, the New York State Education Department has suspended the NYS assessments, including the following New York State testing programs:

- New York State Grades 3-8 English Language Arts Test;
- New York State Grades 3-8 Mathematics Test;
- New York State Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test;
- New York State Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test;
- New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) in Grades K-12; and
- New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for students with severe cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and high school.

This suspension is for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

Cancellations

Are events canceled due to the health crisis being rescheduled (e.g. East musical, fundraisers, etc)?

At this time we do not know what events can be rescheduled.

I have a CPSE/CSE/504 meeting scheduled for my child. Has this been cancelled?

Meetings and evaluations are postponed at this time until further notice. We are continuously assessing the situation and will be making adjustments as we continue to navigate this situation.

I have a registration appointment scheduled for my child. Has this been cancelled?

Yes, all meetings have been canceled and will be rescheduled at a later time.

Other concerns

What number should I call if I have questions and/or concerns?

If you have questions regarding the district's response to COVID-19, call 677-3619.

Are counselors and social workers accessible to students and families during this closure?

Our school counselors, social workers and school psychologists will be available to students via email during regular school hours Monday through Friday, and will make every effort to respond to emails as soon as possible. The following are resources that are available to the community at large should you experience a mental health emergency while school is closed.

Youth under 18: Spectrum Cares - 882.4357

Suicide Crisis Hotline - 1.800.784.2433

Crisis Services - 834-3131 (24 hour hotline)

Crisis Services - 834-1144 (kids helpline)

Mental Health Association of Erie County - 886-1242

National Suicide Hotline - 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

I have been calling the school and no one is answering.

At this time staff are not permitted in the buildings, only administrators on a limited basis. Per the CDC's recommendations, we have taken steps to drastically reduce the amount of people in district facilities. Contact your child's principal with specific questions regarding the school closure <https://www.wscschools.org/Domain/1291>.

Will I be able to pick up my child's essential items at school? (E.g. Medication, instructional materials, instruments etc.) ?

An established schedule was previously sent to all families. If you have other items that are essential, please contact your building principal to arrange for a time.

Does my child need to empty their locker?

At this time buildings are closed to the public.

Will the schools be reopening?

Schools across Erie County are tentatively scheduled to reopen on Monday, April 20. The administration will remain in close contact with the Erie County Health Department in the coming weeks to assess whether this time frame for reopening schools is appropriate.

Will the closure affect/shorten summer break?

The District is continuously assessing the situation and will be making adjustments as we continue to learn more each day.