



DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

35 Fifth Street
Derby, Connecticut 06418

March 29, 2020

Dear Derby Families,

I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to Derby Public School's parents and families for their incredible partnership while we launched our new distance learning plan! Your support, flexibility, and dedication allowed our incredible teachers and staff to quickly put new structures in place for our students to continue learning outside of the traditional classroom.

As we address the reality of continued school closure, Derby Public Schools is prepared to continue teaching and learning virtually. Our team is monitoring and adjusting the district's distance learning plan, while we phase in online learning resources in a structured and supportive manner for our students, families, and staff.

We know that as circumstances change, questions arise and people may feel anxious. This letter is designed to keep the lines of communication open and help answer frequently asked questions. A [parent survey](#) will be available on the district website (www.derbyps.org), social media, and posted by all teachers in Google Classroom to gather feedback from families about their experience and needs with distance learning. We encourage all families to take a moment to complete a brief survey for each student. A [student survey](#) will be distributed via Google Classroom to gather feedback from students in Grades 3-12.

When will students return to school?

On March 23, 2020, Governor Lamont announced that all schools in Connecticut will remain closed through April 20th. Although there have been some reports circulating in the media indicating that schools will be closed through the remainder of the year, that has not yet been decided. We are preparing for all possible scenarios, including a return to school anytime between April 20 - September 2020. Our distance learning plan will continue to be monitored, adjusted and strengthened each week until students return to school.

Who can I contact at the school if there are questions?

Although the schools and Central Office are closed to visitors, our staff is still working remotely and available via email and phone. All Derby Public Schools staff members can be contacted via email using (first initial last name@derbyps.org) - for example: Janet Smith jsmith@derbyps.org. School phones are being answered during regular school hours.

Central Office: 203-736-5027
Bradley School: 203-736-5040
Irving School: 203-736-5043

Derby Middle School: 203-736-1426
Derby High School: 203-736-5032
RAISE/LRU: 203-736-5027

When will the third marking period end?

At this time we are planning to end Quarter 3 on April 10th. Grades will close on April 17th. Students will be encouraged to submit makeup work and missed assignments between April 13-17. Report cards will be mailed home and posted in PowerSchool on April 24, 2020.

How will my child be graded during distance learning?

Grading guidelines for distance learning are being developed and will be shared within the coming days. Students are expected to complete all assigned work, and teachers will be providing feedback. At this point, we have asked teachers to pause on entering physical grades into PowerSchool until our grading guidelines are more fully defined.

Is PowerSchool accessible to parents? What information is available?

Parents are encouraged to set up the Parent Portal in PowerSchool. This will provide access to your child(ren)'s current and historical grades and attendance. It also provides a direct link to the teacher's email to make communication easier. This system is always available, not just during distance learning.

The Parent Portal is easy to set up, but requires your child's assigned access code and password. When the Quarter 3 report cards are sent home, directions and log on information will be included. Parents who would like help setting up the Parent Portal now, can contact the school secretary for assistance over the phone.

Will there be state testing at the end of the year?

The Connecticut State Department of Education received a waiver from the US Department of Education for all end of year summative testing, including: Smarter Balanced, Next Generation Science Standards Assessment, CT SAT School Day, and CT Alternative Assessments. The state will not issue a Next Generation Accountability for the 2019-20 school year.

When is the last day of school?

As of today, the last day of school for students will be June 18, 2020. This date includes the 3 days that our schools were closed due to inclement weather. This calendar reflects 182 school days.

Has a decision been made about prom, graduation, promotion ceremonies, and other end of year events?

We recognize the importance of maintaining the traditions, events and ceremonies that are a part of our student's school experience. Our intent is to ensure these important end of year events happen, but may look different this year given the unique circumstances. We will include students, staff, and families in planning these events.

Will my child be able to take their Advanced Placement (AP) Exams? (DHS AP classes only)

The College Board has been actively developing an at-home protocol for testing all students. We are expecting more details by April 3, 2020 and will provide students and families with this information. Students and teachers are able to participate in free AP review courses that will be delivered "live" by teachers from across the country. The classes are designed as a flexible supplement and are aligned with course content and practice exams. The course schedule is available by [Clicking here for AP Information](#).

How are Special Education and 504 Services being addressed?

Special Education teachers and related service staff providers have developed a [comprehensive plan](#) that offers students access to learning opportunities that are aligned with and in support of each child's

IEP goals and objectives and 504 accommodations. Case managers and paraprofessionals will continue to reach out to families to stay connected, as well as providing activities and resources. If you have any additional questions please contact the Special Education Administrative Assistant, Denise Szczech, at dszczech@derbyps.org.

What should I do if I need help with technology?

If you do not have wifi access or a device, please email DPSITSuport@derbyps.org or go to Derby Middle School Monday - Friday between 11:00 am -1:00 pm. If you need assistance helping your child access Google Classroom or any of the tools being used for distance learning, please contact your child's teacher.

Are meals still being served daily?

Breakfast and lunch is available daily for children under the age of 18 and can be picked up at TEAM, Inc. at 30 Elizabeth Street and Derby Middle School at 73 Chatfield Street between 11 am - 1 pm.

We will continue to provide information and regular updates to families. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We thank you for your support, flexibility and partnership.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Conway, Jr.
Superintendent