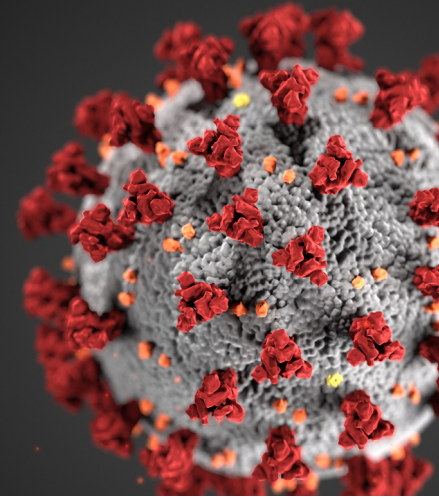




CORONAVIRUS COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

News to keep our school community up to date during the Coronavirus crisis



Message from Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong



Spring is a time of hope and renewal. As we welcome spring's arrival this year, I believe we can be especially hopeful. When this challenge passes, we will have a renewed appreciation of our family, friends, teachers, school nutrition staff, custodial staff, health care workers, and all who are making the extra effort to help during this time.

When learning resumes after Spring Break, Norfolk Public Schools will be even more connected to students through the Zoom video-conferencing tool (see page 2) and the planned rollout of mobile devices and wireless hotspots for our students (see right). We have also refined our grading procedures that provide students an opportunity to improve their grades for Quarters 1, 2 and 3 (see page 3). An announcement detailing procedures for Quarter 4 is forthcoming.

In the meantime, please stay safe, healthy, and connected by relaxing and enjoying your family during this Spring Break!

STUDENTS TO RECEIVE MOBILE DEVICES, WIRELESS HOTSPOTS

Since March 23, when Governor Northam directed schools to close through the remainder of the academic year, Norfolk Public Schools' leaders have been working tirelessly to find a way to support learning at home with technology.

NPS is gearing up to distribute mobile devices and wireless hotspots to those students who have reported that they need access to these devices.

"It is important to make sure that every child who needs a mobile device and/or Internet access can get it," said Superintendent Dr. Sharon I. Byrdsong.

"Having these tools will help students access the Learning in Place plans posted online as well as our new Zoom video-conferencing tool that teachers can use to host online classroom sessions with their students."

Learning in Place packets will continue to be available in paper form (see page 3 for pick-up details).

Additionally, teachers who indicated they had insufficient or no Internet access at home have already received a wireless hotspot (MiFi) during the week of April 6.

NPS has finalized a plan to distribute a mobile device (iPad, Chromebook, or Windows laptop) to every student who needs one as well as a wireless hotspot to enable them to access the Internet at home.

Planned for launch beginning the week of April 27, the distribution will occur at schools where an organized drive-thru process will ensure safety in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

The check-out process will include student verification and a required signature of a parent/guardian for the equipment. Each device will be sanitized before distribution.

Look for details that will soon be provided to families regarding the distribution process.

NPS to Observe Spring Break, Meal Distribution Will Continue

Norfolk Public Schools' staff will be observing Spring Break during April 13-17, but will continue to serve "grab-and-go meals" Monday through Friday at all 12 school food service sites from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m.

As a reminder, the school meal distribution sites are: Booker T. Washington High School, Azalea Gardens Middle School, Southside STEM Academy at Campostella, Lake Taylor School, and the following elementary schools: P.B. Young Sr., James Monroe, Suburban Park, Coleman Place, Camp Allen, Oceanair, St. Helena, and Norview.

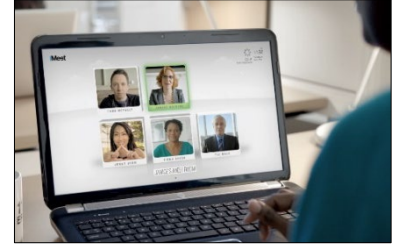
The additional three sites that provide "grab-and-go meals" via NPS school buses will remain in operation as well. The location and service times for those sites are Titustown Recreation Center (7545 Diven St.) from 11 – 11:30 a.m.; Huntersville Community Center (830 Goff St.) from 12 noon – 12:30 p.m.; and Grandy Village Recreation Center (3017 Kimball Terrace) from 1 – 1:30 p.m.

At the end of March, the Norfolk Public Schools' "grab-and-go meal" distribution sites had provided nearly 27,000 breakfasts and lunches to students. The school division is committed to serving families who need this service through June 12 (the end of the academic year).



Zoom Video Conferencing: A New Way Students Can Stay Connected to Their Classrooms

Norfolk Public Schools now offers a video-conferencing tool called Zoom that teachers can use to host online classroom sessions with their students during this extended school closure. It's



important for parents/guardians to understand this technology tool because many teachers will be using it for learning. Parents/Guardians should be comfortable with their children participating in virtual classroom sessions.

Following is information parents/guardians should know:

- To ensure Zoom sessions offer a safe and secure learning environment, teachers are required to use meeting IDs and passwords. Teachers will be using a virtual waiting room option that allows them to control admittance into the classroom session. This prevents unauthorized entrance of an outside individual.
- Students will be able to see classmates during a Zoom session, but a teacher can choose to turn off a student's video to prevent distracting or inappropriate content.
- Students can only chat with the teacher. Private chatting among students will not be permitted.
- Teachers will schedule their Zoom lessons for specific days and times so parents/guardians are aware when these classroom sessions will take place.

Teachers are required to obtain parental/guardian permission for students to participate in Zoom sessions. Once a classroom teacher seeks and obtains parental/guardian permission, NPS will consider that permission is granted for any and all sessions hosted by that teacher during this academic year.

However, permission given to one teacher cannot be transferred to another. For example, a history teacher who has e-mailed a parent/guardian and received permission for a child to participate cannot transfer that permission to an Algebra teacher. If your child's teacher(s) e-mails you for permission, we encourage you to consider granting it as this face-to-face virtual and real-time contact with teachers and classmates can be engaging and inspiring.

Zoom can be used on any mobile device including a smartphone, laptop, desktop computer, or tablet.

Have more questions? Please contact your child's teacher or visit the NPS [Coronavirus web page](#) where Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents and Students on Zoom video-conferencing are now posted.

UPDATE ON QUARTER 3 GRADING PROCEDURES

Governor Northam’s order to close schools occurred several weeks before the end of the Quarter 3 grading period. As a result, NPS had to close the Quarter 3 grading period as of Friday, March 13, which was the last day students attended school. Please note the following procedures that will be followed to calculate grades for report cards:

- Students are exempt from “missing” work that was assigned during Quarter 3 prior to March 13. However, students will be afforded every opportunity to complete “missing” work assigned prior to March 13, if submitting the work improves their Quarter 3 grade. Students may submit missing work until April 24 for the work to be included in the Quarter 3 grade calculation.
- Students may submit missing work for all previous quarters, including Quarter 3, until the conclusion of the academic year. All make-up work completed by students will be calculated as a part of students’ grades only if it positively impacts their overall average.
- All Learning in Place content packets, and other work assigned to students during the school closure, will not apply to students’ grades during Quarters 1, 2, and 3.
- NPS administrators continue to work to finalize a plan for Quarter 4 procedures that is fair and equitable and does not penalize students who are unable to fully engage in learning via the Learning in Place plans. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

Reminder: Office Hours for Schools and Teachers

Principals have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. to assist parents/guardians with enrolling new students, and picking up learning packets, medication or valuables. You will need to make an appointment with your child’s principal via e-mail before reporting to the school. Principals’ e-mail addresses are located on each school’s website.

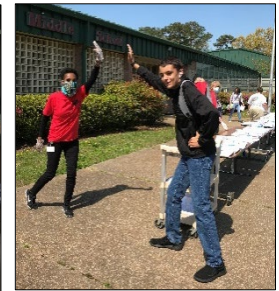
Teachers have virtual/remote office hours from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, for communicating with parents/guardians and students regarding learning activities. We encourage parents/guardians and students to stay connected with their teachers.

Resources for Students with Disabilities

Instructional materials and activities supporting learning and engagement have been updated and posted under the [Learning in Place Phase II plans](#).

Also posted are links for a “Story of the Day” on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10 a.m. (recordings are also available).

Teachers and specialists will maintain their virtual/remote office hours and will use multiple ways to reach out to parents/guardians. Teachers will also be identifying and analyzing data related to students’ academic and functional performance in preparation for IEP meetings to be held after school reopens. Questions can be directed to your child’s principal or teacher via e-mail.



Distribution of Learning in Place Packets (Phase II) to Resume the Week of April 20

Norfolk Public Schools thanks the many volunteers and staff throughout the school division who stepped up to hand out Learning in Place packets (Phase II) during the week of April 6. There will be no packet distribution during Spring Break. Distribution of learning packets will resume the following week on Tuesday, April 21, and Thursday, April 23, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the 12 meal distribution sites.

All Learning in Place plans for both Phase I (March 18 – April 3) and Phase II (April 6 - 24) can be found on the school division’s [website](#). Phase III Learning in Place plans will be available beginning on April 27.

Taking Care of Your Children and Each Other During this Uncertain Time

Constant news stories and updates due to coronavirus have put a strain on most of our lives. The uncertainty and changes to our daily routines have increased the anxiety levels of just about everyone.

Many children and their families worry about the unknown and are unsure about what is going to happen. The events of this time can be particularly challenging to the mental health of children and teens.

While our students are away from school, Norfolk Public Schools wants to encourage them, their families, and those they care about to stay safe. Our hope is that they will strive to protect their physical, emotional, and mental health.

Students and their caregivers should practice self-care while social distancing. An effective strategy for self-care is to try and stay socially connected, even when circumstances dictate that friends and family may be physically distant. Check on family and friends with a telephone call, text, or e-mail.

Another strategy is to use social media responsibly. While gathering news and information is helpful and necessary, take a break if the amount or intensity becomes too much. Be mindful of how young ones are handling the news and the amount of information they are receiving.

Check out more tips and resources in the box to the right.



HELPFUL RESOURCES TO INFORM AND SUPPORT

[Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with COVID-19](#) by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network

[The Ultimate Kids' Guide to the New Coronavirus](#) by Livescience.com

[Resources to Support Mental Health and Coping with the Coronavirus](#) by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center

[Tips for Handling Work and Kids During COVID-19 Isolation](#) by Livescience.com

[Talking to Children About Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry