

# WHARTON BOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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“Learn to Thrive in a Dynamic World”

## Marie V. Duffy Elementary School

“Governor’s School of Excellence”

Pamela S. Blalock, Principal

## Alfred C. MacKinnon Middle School

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Superintendent

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Business Administrator

Colleen Silvestri  
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Marie Giantomasi  
Director of Special Education  
& Child Study Team Services

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137 East Central Avenue  
Wharton, NJ 07885

July 21, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

After thorough and thoughtful planning, and in concert with a “Return to School Committee”, comprised of staff, administrators, representation from the Board of Education, the Department of Health, the Wharton Police Department, parents, the Office of Emergency Management, and other greater Wharton community resources, I would like to provide an overview of the Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen the Wharton Borough Public School District. This overview will share many details from the plan that student families need and want to know. Later this month, the entirety of this lengthy document will be available on the district website.

This overview will provide information divided into the following areas:

### **Student Learning, Technology, Food Services, Safety, and Cleaning**

#### **Student Learning:**

The Wharton Public School District will reopen with a Hybrid approach. This approach will afford students opportunities for both “in-person” and “distance learning” while providing increased levels of “social distancing”. The student population will be divided in half, by grade level, while accounting for siblings. Students will be assigned to group A or group B. Each group will receive their instruction “in-person” twice a week and via “distance learning” two times per week. One day per week will be a “Flex” day. Please see the below schedule:

| <b>Monday</b> | <b>Tuesday</b>                          | <b>Wednesday</b>                        | <b>Thursday</b>                         | <b>Friday</b>                           |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| “Flex Day”    | Group A: In-Person<br>Group B: Distance | Group A: Distance<br>Group B: In-Person | Group A: In-Person<br>Group B: Distance | Group A: Distance<br>Group B: In-Person |

On “Flex Mondays”, students will have learning activities available to them virtually. The benefit of a “Flex” day is twofold. Vulnerable students/student groups can be prioritized and invited for “in-person” instruction and staff will have the necessary time for collaboration, professional development to better serve your children, and planning.

Attendance will be taken by teaching staff on your child’s “in-person” days and a Google form will be completed on “distance” days to record attendance.

Grading will return to our “pre-COVID” grading systems in each school.

Staff will have face coverings on throughout the day and students will be strongly encouraged to wear them. While constant wearing of a mask is encouraged for students, they will be permitted to remove them when in socially distant educational settings and based upon health needs and age appropriateness. However in “common areas”, such as hallways, their use will be required.

#### **Technology:**

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- Chromebook devices will be available to all students. Based upon age appropriateness students will carry these devices to and from school. A backpack with a laptop sleeve is suggested for your children.
- The district has contracted with Optimum/Lightpath to provide access/connectivity to the internet for anyone in need.
- Firewalls and “Go Guardian” have been procured to provide added cyber security to protect our students.

Your child’s school will schedule times, in later August, for families to pick up devices, text books and other materials, so they are ready to learn on the very first day of school.

## **Food Services:**

- Students will be provided meals for both “in-person” and “distance” learning days.
- Elementary students will have meals delivered to them in their classrooms, while the middle school students will eat, in a socially distant arrangement, in the cafeteria or gymnasium.

## **Safety:**

- The district has purchased shields and a reserve of face coverings should a student not arrive at school with one.
- The district has also secured plexiglass partitions and other dividers to outfit locations where social distancing is more challenging.
- Temperature scanners, affixed on pedestals, at seven major entrances to the facility have been procured.
- Signage and markers will be in hallways and “common areas” to remind all of healthy practices and social distancing.
- Hand sanitizers will be available in classrooms, hallways, offices, and at exits/entrances.
- Grade levels will enter and exit the building at assigned locations, this will reduce crowds at single entrances.
- Isolation rooms have been established in each school to separate anyone displaying symptoms of illness, until picked up by a family member.

## **Cleaning:**

- A daily disinfection of the building will occur.
- The district has also hired additional staff to disinfect “high-touch” items throughout the school day.
- The Nurse’s office and Isolation rooms will be equipped with hydroxyl processors to provide constant disinfection.
- Students will “wipe-in/out” of classrooms, with disinfecting wipes, should any room change occur.

While this correspondence does not provide every detail of the Wharton Restart and Recovery Plan, it provides student families an overview of what the plan entails. The complete document will be shared on the district website at the end of the month along with a slide show reviewing the plan. The building principals will be providing students and parents more specific information and details throughout the month of August.

Please keep in mind that there is no “perfect plan”, but be assured that the Wharton Public School District, with the help of health and community organizations, staff, and parents, has taken every measure to ensure the safest return possible.

Sincerely,

*Christopher J. Herdman*

Christopher J. Herdman  
Superintendent