

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

Robert D. Hayzler, Principal

Christopher Herdman
Superintendent

Sandy Cammarata
Business Administrator

Kenneth Russo
Director of
Curriculum & Instruction

Marie Giantomasi
Director of Special Education
& Child Study Team Services

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137 East Central Avenue
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August 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you have had time to relax and enjoy the summer weather.

This purpose of this correspondence is twofold:

First, to announce that our "messaging" or notification system will be shifting from Honeywell to Realtime. Honeywell has served the district well, but with this service no longer available, and our ability to offer this service through Realtime, we are able to further convenience parents by consolidating resources to one location.

Second, to provide an update regarding the opening of school in September, which will be followed up with more information from your school's principal.

Realtime Notification System

With Realtime Notification System, you will be able to receive voicemail, text messages and emails to the locations and addresses you set within Realtime. Additionally, this service will provide the message in the language of your choosing.

To ensure that you receive the messages, please go into Realtime to ensure you have your information entered and properly checked. In this process you are to check the box next to the phone number and email address that messages are to be sent to. Entering and/or reviewing your information is the first step, but you must check the boxes to receive communication via this system.

The district will be sending a test message on Wednesday, August 18 at 7:00 pm, to ensure you are receiving important messages.

School Opening

I have spared you from reading different versions of plans that I have written throughout the summer knowing that they would likely have to be edited and reworked as new guidance and mandates were installed, with that, here is where we currently stand.

Please note, this may be in need of updating prior to the commencement of the school year.

Are students permitted to "opt out" and receive their instruction virtually?

No.

Can a district choose to provide virtual instruction?

No. However a district may address individual situations as needed, but may not move the district to be "all virtual".

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Are masks required?:

Yes. Unlike prior Executive Orders, E.O. 251 explicitly requires "every official, employee or agent" of the District to fully cooperate with the terms set forth therein and states that no contradictory orders or policies may be enacted by the District. In simple terms, this states that no internal or external pressures can result in the District opting for its own decision or guidance related to masking.

There exist some exceptions to the masking mandate as detailed below:

- Where doing so would inhibit the individual's health (i.e., in the case of extreme heat);
- When the individual has trouble breathing or is otherwise incapacitated;
- When a student has a medical condition documented in an IEP or 504 Plan, and such IEP or 504 Plan precludes use of a face mask;
- When the individual is under two years of age;
- When the individual is engaged in an activity which cannot be performed while wearing a mask;
- When the individual is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- When a student is engaged in high intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain six feet of social distance from all other individuals; or
- When wearing a face mask creates and unsafe condition in which to operate or execute a task.

This applies to **inside** the school facility. When the students are engaged in "indoor" physical activities, masks may be removed according to the guidance above. Also, for instrumental music, students may remove their masks to play their instrument as required.

Will we have our Fall Sports programs?

Yes. Soccer and Cross Country are outdoor sports.

Will we have field trips?

To begin the year, field trips will be "virtual" only. This will be constantly re-evaluated throughout the year in the hopes to returning to off-site learning experiences.

Are students required to practice social distancing?

The recommended practice is for the students to maintain three feet for social distancing. This practice shall not interfere with the educational processes and settings for the students.

Will we have the partitions on each student desk?

No. I hope to be able to begin the year without them, as all are required to wear masks. I would like to have as much "normal" as possible. We will have them stored should they be needed in the future.

What are we doing for Social Emotional Learning?

The district has contracted with a service and will have clinicians on site, full time. These clinicians will be able to support any student in need, provide professional development to staff, meet, work and visit with student families.

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As I have throughout the pandemic, I will continue to share as much information as possible. With the exception of the masking mandate and being mindful of distancing, I would like to return to our schools to as “normal” a learning environment as has been offered in the past.

You will receive more, and school specific information from your child’s school principal and I will continue to provide district-wide updates.

Please know that the district has been working tirelessly this summer to create and provide additional opportunities for both students and families throughout the upcoming school year.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer and please remember to update your information in Realtime prior to our “test” message on Wednesday, August 18 at 7:00 pm.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Herdman
Superintendent