



HERRICKS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Pupil Personnel Services

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Dear Parents/Guardians of students who receive special education program and/or services

Most importantly I hope you and your families are all well, are staying safe and are comfortable. Herricks has such a strong sense of community and together we will get through this. Every day we are closer to being on the other side of this health crisis.

Last week the district moved into Phase 2 of e-learning/remote learning for your children; general education and special education alike. In this ever changing environment, we are committed to providing your children with their mandated supports, programs and services as per their IEP to the greatest extent possible. This has been an evolving process which changes as the closure extends and as we continue to receive guidance from the federal, state and local agencies. We closely monitor these requirements and will continue to keep the families and teachers up to date. Our teachers, related service providers and staff continually engage in professional development and collaborate with each other and the administration with the ongoing goal of improving our provision of instruction and support.

As per NYSED, school districts must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) so that he or she can progress in the general education curriculum. During this health crisis, they must continue to be provided with FAPE (a Free and Appropriate Public Education), although the manner for which these services are provided may not be the same as typically delivered. Students with disabilities must have equal access to the learning and receive educational benefits that are comparable to those received by others in the program. Instruction should be modified, or separate, with aids and services necessary to provide access to students with disabilities.

The Pupil Personnel Administrative Team has worked with Herricks administration to develop guidelines for the delivery of programs and services to students with IEPs. These guidelines are aligned with the guidance received from USDOE and NYSED guidance documents, district directives and expectations, input from our teachers, consistent with our neighboring districts, and best practices. These guidelines will be rolled out during this Phase 2

of e-learning. This may look a little different for different students based on students' needs, programs, abilities and disabilities, and the judgment of the teacher in collaboration with the families. We certainly understand that there will continue to be individual circumstances and situations where these guidelines may need to be modified. Feel free to reach out to your child's teacher(s), or to us to discuss any concerns or questions that you may have.

In Phase 1 we were in "crisis mode" and we were connecting with our students, providing resources for them and their families, and we working towards maintenance and general skill acquisition. As we moved into Phase 2, (see E. Guercin's parent letter) <https://www.herricks.org/cms/lib/NY02208178/Centricity/Domain/1524/Herricks%20E-Learning%20Plan%20Phase%202%20P%204-1-20.pdf> we began to continue to move forward in curriculum with ongoing direct instruction and the introduction of new material. Expectations and explanations were provided to the teachers and staff for using both direct instruction, both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced).

- Synchronous (real-time) instruction/support can include live video either individually or in groups as per the teacher's judgment and knowledge of the content, the goals and the students. This also provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to give and receive feedback on instruction/therapy and will provide necessary data for progress monitoring.
- Live video instruction itself does not violate privacy or FERPA. Yes, parents may see other students' faces and/or names but that, in and of itself, is not a violation of the student's privacy. Staff members are advised to not share any verbal or written information about any student's disability status or IEP with anyone other than the parent/guardian of that student. (Please see the parent letter of April 2, 2020).
- https://www.herricks.org/cms/lib/NY02208178/Centricity/Domain/1524/letter%20parents_guardians%204_2_2020%20-%20Google%20Docs.pdf

As we move forward we continue to be providing IEP mandates "to the greatest extent possible".

So what can families expect? Variables including teachers' skills sets, caseloads, roles, individual student needs, families' and personal situations have influenced the provision of services. We are moving in a direction where we will be more consistent as a district in implementing IEPs during this health crisis. As the closure extends you can expect that related service providers and teachers of pull out services will be providing instruction and therapy to the students using a combination of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) platforms and modalities. Therapists, counselors, and teachers welcome input and collaboration with families to best meet the needs of the students. Some of these services will be in real time to better provide direct services and so feedback can be shared. Co-teachers/Consultant Teacher

Direct and other providers of “push in” supports will continue to collaborate with and/or join in on classroom instruction to provide the necessary modifications and adaptations for students to access instruction based on the IEP mandate and the needs of the students. Our intention is to provide consistency (as best as possible) across the district, to collaborate with parents/guardians about students’ needs, and to implement IEPs in this current environment to the greatest extent possible; given the instructional program that all students are receiving during the closure.

The PPS Leadership Team members are in constant contact with the teachers and providers to ensure we are meeting your child’s needs as per their IEP. We all welcome your feedback, questions and/or concerns. Please keep in contact with your child’s teacher(s) and/or one of us in Special Education Administration.

Thank you so much for trusting us with your children. We take our responsibilities very seriously and are committed to doing everything in our power to keep your children successful, happy, at ease and engaged. Please stay safe, wash your hands, stay home, and I look forward to seeing you all again sooner than later. Every day we are closer to this all being behind us. Feel free to contact any of us if you have any questions or concerns. With Warm Regards,

Ms. Lois Jankeloff, Director of Pupil
Personnel

Ms. Susan Saban, Assistant Director of
Pupil Personnel

Dr. Stephanie Knowles, HS Chairperson of
Special Education

Dr. Robyn Tsiokos, MS Chairperson of
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