

March 20, 2020

Dear Horseheads Parents and Guardians,

We as a Horseheads community are working to help support students and families in this unprecedented time of extended closure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We are very proud of the time and effort staff are giving in order to have materials ready. We feel students will continue to gain meaningful benefit from these materials and home skill plans. Some materials went home on Monday; the remainder were mailed home shortly thereafter. These materials are intended to help support skill retention for your child as well as provide individualized home-based skill plans from related service providers. The teachers and related service providers will continue to communicate on a weekly basis to ensure we have a strong home-school connection. This will allow families to continue to support the implementation of your child's individualized education program.

There are additional resources on our District website on how to talk to your children about COVID-19, as well as general information about how to support children in uncertain times. [Click here](#) to access these resources. Please look for additional resources and general information on our website in the coming days. If you do not have access to our website, please do not hesitate to reach out to Student Services at (607) 739-5601 x4301 and we will mail copies home.

IEP Programs and Services

During a school closure, the District remains responsible for the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP). Please note: If a closure causes educational services for all students to pause, then the school/district is generally not required to provide services to the affected students eligible for special education services during that same period of time. This includes Preschool services as Chemung County has suspended CPSE services at this time.

After the extended closure, we will review how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. An IEP Team and, as appropriate to an individual student with a disability, the personnel responsible for ensuring FAPE to a student for the purposes of Section 504 would be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements.

CSE/CPSE/504 Meetings

All CSE/CPSE/504 meetings scheduled from 3/16/20 to 6/26/20 are being arranged to continue in a timely manner. At this time, all meetings will be held via conference call.

In the interim, all students remain eligible for services as identified on their IEP through 6/26/20 or until the CSE meeting can be held. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to your CSE or 504 Chairperson.

We will continue communicating with parents and guardians regarding your child's IEP services during and after this extended school closure. Again, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Student Services at (607) 739-5601 x4301.

Best wishes and be well,
Horseheads Central School District Student Services

Question and Answers for Parents of Students with Disabilities

Which schools are closing, and for how long?

The Governor has declared that all public and private schools in New York State will be closed March 17 to April 1. Schools will close no later than Tuesday, March 17, and will not reopen until at least April 1. In Horseheads, we have closed schools until April 13, but if the Governor orders schools opened before April 13, we will inform parents.

How will families be involved in meetings scheduled for students with special needs during this extended dismissal?

CSE/CPSE/504 Meetings

All CSE meetings scheduled from 3/16/20 to 6/26/20 are being arranged to continue in a timely manner. At this time, all meetings will be held via conference call. You will receive a letter and phone call to confirm meeting dates and times.

CPSE Services

Chemung County has cancelled all CPSE services until further notice.

IEP/504 Plan Recommendations

During a school closure, the District remains responsible for the free appropriate public education (FAPE) of students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP). Please note: If a closure causes educational services for all students to pause, then the school/district is generally not required to provide services to the affected students eligible for special education services during that same period of time.

After the extended closure, we will review how the closure impacted the delivery of special education and related services to students eligible for special education services. An IEP Team and, as appropriate to an individual student with a disability, the personnel responsible for ensuring FAPE to a student for the purposes of Section 504 would be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements.

How will the District handle potential upcoming evaluations?

If the evaluation of a student requires face-to-face assessment or observation, the evaluation would need to be delayed until school reopens. Evaluations and re-evaluations that do not require face-to-face assessments or observations may take place while schools are closed, so long as a student's parent or legal guardian consents. These same principals apply to similar activities conducted by appropriate personnel for a student with a disability who has a plan developed under Section 504, or who is being evaluated under 504.

What will be the mode of communication for families of students with special needs?

The teachers and related service providers will continue to communicate on a weekly basis to ensure we have a strong home-school connection. This will allow families to continue to support the implementation of a student's individualized education program. This communication will take place in a number of ways such as e-mail, phone calls, or videos posted to classroom social media such as SeeSaw. Follow-up communication will continue on next steps if the school remains closed as well as next steps once the school reopens.

There are additional resources on our District website on how to talk to your children about COVID-19, as well as general information about how to support children in uncertain times. [Click here](#) to access these resources. Please look for additional resources and general information on our website in the coming days.

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Will meals be provided for students during closures?

Yes. The district is providing meals for district families who need assistance. Breakfasts and lunches are available for those 18 years old or younger at no charge. Meals will be provided via drive up or walk up service for recipients to take home. Meal distribution will be weekdays as follows:

Center Street Elementary School:	10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Millport Fire Department:	11:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Families who are unable to get to a meal site can call 739-5601, x4260, x4295, or x4248 to set up delivery for the following day.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

How will families be notified about additional information?

Districts are expected to follow their standard procedures for notifying families. This includes, but is not limited to, the District Website, phone calls, emails, text messages, postal mailing and the local news stations.

How can I learn more about COVID-19?

- Chemung County Health Department: <http://www.chemungcountyhealth.org/> or (607) 737-2028
- New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH): <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- NYSDOH COVID-19 Information Line: 1-888-364-3065
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>