

March 27, 2020

Dear Whitehall-Coplay School District Families,

We hope that this letter finds everyone in our school community well and taking all the necessary precautions to remain healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic. We are compassionate to the realities this pandemic brings to our community – educationally, financially and emotionally. These unprecedented times call for extreme measures and we must remember to support each other. Together, we can and will overcome this most challenging situation. We wish to thank you for your support these past two weeks as we have worked to implement an educational plan that provides educational opportunities for all of our students.

As you are aware, Governor Wolf announced on March 23, 2020, that Pennsylvania Public Schools will remain closed through April 6, 2020. While this is the plan as of today, we must understand that schools may remain closed beyond the April 6th date in order to continue the mitigation of the coronavirus. With this information in mind, our dedicated and talented administration and teachers have been busy planning for a continuity of education as per the Pennsylvania Department of Education's guidelines. Flexibility and meeting our students' varied needs are of the utmost importance, while also providing opportunity for your children to feel connected and engaged with their teachers.

Continuity of Education

Our district has devised a solid plan for enrichment, remediation, and the extension of learning in a more structured environment that is set to begin for all students on Monday, March 30, 2020. Our goal is to provide learning opportunities, engagement and guidance, while bearing in mind the difficulties all students and parents may be facing outside of school. With additional structure, we are hopeful there will be increased participation and responsiveness. We are confident in our educators' ability to communicate with your children virtually, but we do ask for your patience. It is to be expected that there will be some challenges as we transition to a new learning environment.

At this point in time, learning activities provided by your children's teachers will not be graded, nor will there be the introduction of new material. As previously stated, there will be a focus on review, reinforcement and enrichment. Our district will, however, be working and planning to develop the continuity of education further with structured new learning should school closures remain in effect for a prolonged time.

Please be on the lookout for a message from your children's building principal this weekend with specific instruction and information with regard to the continuity of education.

Access to Devices

Students in grades 9-12 have their own Chromebooks to access online education. The district will be implementing a Chromebook "pick up" for Middle School students who are in need of a device. This will be a challenge, but we are working on a "drive through pick up" early next week for students and parents. We will then likely follow the same procedures for our Elementary students. We are hopeful that we will have enough devices for those students/parents who may be in need. More information with regard to the pick up of Chromebooks will follow in the immediate future. Additionally, please refer to the district website at <https://www.whitehallcoplay.org/Page/3512> for resources on obtaining internet services.

Food Distribution

The district will continue distributing breakfast and lunch on a grab and go basis available for any student in the district. We have pick up scheduled from 10-12 in front of the HS on Monday and Wednesday. On Monday students receive two days worth of food and on Wednesday they receive three days worth of food.

Guidance for Talking with Children

Providing guidance to children on how to react to stressful events can be a great challenge. If you need assistance and/or tips on how to talk with your children about COVID-19, please refer to the links listed below. You will find information and additional resources on a variety of helpful topics.

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/helping-children-cope-with-changes-resulting-from-covid-19>

In closing, please know that the Whitehall-Coplay School District remains committed to student needs and providing the resources necessary for learning from home. We fully understand how disruptive the school closures have been to our families and we truly appreciate all that you do for our children and our community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lorie Hackett

WCSD Superintendent