

Message from Thomas W. Giard III, Superintendent of Schools

As you are aware, I sent an email earlier today regarding an indefinite school closure, being a minimum of two weeks, beginning today, Friday, March 13, 2020 at 5:00 PM. I know many of you have questions and we are prioritizing and triaging those questions. The items below will answer a multitude of questions we are receiving. Please be patient for individual responses as our response time may be longer than normal.

This email will provide you follow-up details on the following:

- Schools and Offices during the Closure
- Picking up your Child's Medication at School (Should you need to do so)
- Obtaining Supplemental Learning Activities
- Distance Learning versus Learning Activities during Closure
- Obtaining Personal Belongings – Essential Items Only
- State Assessment Information for SBAC and SAT Administration
- Meal Assistance for Families During Closure

Schools and Offices during the Closure

Schools will be open to the public next week during limited times.

- Monday, March 16, 2020 – 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Tuesday, March 17, 2020 – 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Central Office will remain open throughout the closure based on current community health conditions.

After Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 2:00 PM buildings will be completely closed to the public. CLMS and WHS offices will remain open for phone calls and email communication. We are asking you to not visit school offices during the closure. Elementary school offices will be closed after Tuesday, March 17, 2020 but administration will be monitoring their emails and voicemails. Elementary parents, and any other parent, who need immediate attention may contact central office at any time. You can reach central office at 860-444-5801.

The above is subject to change if community health conditions change. We will keep you updated.

Picking up your Child's Medication at School (Should you need to do so)

You are not required to pick up your child's medication during this school closure. Should you need to, the nurse will be available Monday March 16, 2020 from 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM. Should you not be available during this window of time to see the nurse, the school will also be open to the public next week on Monday until 2:00 PM and Tuesday, March 17, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM and a school administrator will assist you. Please check in at the main office when you arrive.

Obtaining Supplemental Learning Activities

Every teacher webpage has electronic copies of the supplemental learning activities, as well as other online resources of other educational activities your child can do during this period of closure. Teacher webpages can be accessed through the staff directory on the website at https://www.waterfordschools.org/staff_directory. Search for the teacher's name then click on the globe icon to access the teacher webpage. Hard copies of supplemental learning activities are also available in each main office. Each school will be open to the public Monday, March 16, 2020 from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM and Tuesday, March 17, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Please check in at the main office when you arrive. If you are having difficulty locating the online resources for your children, please call or email building principals directly and they will assist you. If you are unable to obtain the hard copies of supplemental learning materials during these times, please contact central office and we will assist you.

Distance Learning versus Supplemental Learning Activities during Closure

Some of you have asked why we did not implement a distance learning environment/remote learning environment. Distance learning would be defined as conducting an official school day while students are at home in these circumstances. Following the strong recommendation of the CSDE, we opted for a full school closure while still providing supplemental learning activities for students to remain engaged in learning. At this time the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has strongly discouraged districts from utilizing a remote learning environment approach due to concerns over instructional consistency (especially in the early grades), equity of access both within the district and between districts, disruption of special education services, and multiple employee contractual issues. A district would have to apply to the CSDE for a waiver stating that all of the state and federal laws that we meet each day while in session are able to be met while school is out of session. We are following the CSDE's recommendation of a full school closure while providing supplemental learning activities. We will continue to provide your child with supplemental learning activities throughout the closure via teacher webpages and hard copies at schools.

Obtaining Personal Belongings – Essential Items Only

If you need to come in to get any *essential* personal belongings, each school will be open to the public Monday, March 16, 2020 from 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM and Tuesday, March 17, 2020 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Please check in at the main office when you arrive.

State Assessment Information for SBAC and SAT Administration

Depending on the length of closure, state summative assessment (SBAC and SAT) may need to be rescheduled. When we know more information on our return date, we will be able to provide more detailed information on the impact of school closure on state summative assessments.

From CSDE

“All state assessments offer either extended testing windows over several weeks (e.g., Smarter Balanced, NGSS) or multiple testing dates that are at least two weeks apart (e.g., SAT). If in spite of this flexibility, state assessment administration in a district is hampered due to unavoidable school closures resulting from a COVID-19 outbreak, the CSDE will explore solutions that will enable the district to complete administration of the mandated assessment(s).”

Meal Assistance for Families During Closure

Information will be distributed in the near future. We are working on plans to address this.