



65 Highland Avenue
PO Box 339
Peapack, NJ 07977
908-234-0011
www.matheny.org

3/9/2020

To the Matheny School Community:

Over the past few weeks, our educational community has been keenly tracking information related to the outbreak of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). During this time, we have received detailed guidelines from the NJ Department of Health, working in concert with the Centers for Disease Control. We have also had extensive communications with the Governor's Office, the NJ Department of Education, the Office of Emergency Management, and our local health officials in the region.

As you are aware at The Matheny School the health and safety of our students and our staff is a priority for us. Information to date suggests that COVID-19 causes mild-to-moderate illness and symptoms like the flu, including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Preliminary data suggest that older adults and persons with underlying health conditions or compromised immune systems may be at greater risk for severe illness.

Although currently as per the CDC, the immediate risk of this virus to the general American public is still believed to be low, due to our medically fragile student population, we at Matheny would like to communicate some important information with our school community.

At Matheny we are doing daily temperature checks on all students upon arrival to monitor for fevers. Any student, staff member, volunteer, or visitor, with fever or upper respiratory infection symptoms will be reported to the school nurse immediately and excused from school. We ask that you assist us by monitoring your child while at home, and alert us if your child becomes ill. If you or a member of your household has recently traveled to one of the substantially impacted areas: China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, or Iran please contact the School Principal and/or school nurse. At the school we are implementing thorough disinfecting protocol for the classroom environments and all staff will be using appropriate hygiene to minimize risk of transmission. The School Facilities Manager has brought on additional staff to maintain a deep clean. We have instituted zone precautions for influenza and cancelled all school trips in the abundance of caution.

In addition to our school staff, the Department of Health, and Department of Education our school benefits from the Infection Control Committee and we are coordinating our efforts to maximize safety. This week, as the first cases of COVID-19 are confirmed in New Jersey, we write to share with you our plans for the continued delivery of instruction

in the event local health conditions and/or government mandate the closing of our school.

I. What will happen immediately following a school closing?

Should the decision be made to close our school for an extended period of time, the first two days following dismissal will be non-instructional days for students. During that period, eLearning class schedules and online assignments/tutorials will be sent to all students. eLearning classes will begin on the third day following closure. Our model begins with a remote all periods meet schedule followed by a rotating schedule similar to the one students currently have. Each five-day cycle will involve one live-streamed lesson and two self-guided (teacher monitored) sessions per class.

As part of the transition process, building administration and our technology, guidance, and child study teams will be available to troubleshoot, answer questions and assist students/families.

II. How will instruction be delivered?

The Matheny School is uniquely positioned to provide students with an authentic and engaging eLearning. Each teacher is assigned a Mac laptop, and we are equipping our therapists, and substitutes with either iPads or Mac products.

III. What about Special Education services?

We will make every effort to meet the requirements for teacher-student contact time for students with disabilities via distance learning. Student progress will be monitored and feedback provided online by special education teachers, substitutes, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Specialists with the opportunity to communicate directly during scheduled times. Upon returning to school, the IEP team will determine if additional services are required.

IV. Will Social Workers and School Health Services be available?

Understanding that the closure of schools does not eliminate the support our community needs our school social worker and nursing team will be available (via email, or elearning) beginning on the second day following closure and throughout the period of remote learning.

V. Will eLearning days count towards the 180-day requirement?



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On 3/5/2020, we received guidance from the Department of Education regarding the statutory 180-day requirement. Specifically, the Department noted that “online instruction” will be permitted to count towards the 180-day requirement when: (1) it is part of a preparedness plan approved by the Executive County Superintendent; (2) it meets the home instruction requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 (6A); and (3) closure was initiated pursuant to “a written directive from either the NJDOH or health officer of the jurisdiction”.

The Matheny School’s eLearning Plan exceeds the requirement of 6A and is currently before the County Superintendent for approval.

VI. What will happen with athletics and extracurricular activities in the event we close schools?

Unless otherwise directed by the Department of Education/Health, all athletic events and extracurricular activities (including field trips) will be canceled.

VII. How can you help with preparing for e-learning?

If your child resides at home regularly or would be at home during a prolonged school closure please provide us with the following information:

- 1) Name of student
- 2) Internet at home Yes/No
- 3) Speed of Internet
- 4) Details of device that may be used for e-learning
- 5) Which of the following is the caregiver at home familiar with Skype, Facetime, Zoom, or another method of face-to-face computer based communication?

Please email responses to afraumann@matheny.org and cc Mathenyschool@matheny.org

We want to close by thanking you for your patience and understanding. The Matheny School Team prides ourselves on Enriching Lives and Growing Abilities. The students and the safety of our community is at the forefront of our minds, always! While the circumstances garnering our attention and concerns are both unique and challenging, it is simply another opportunity for our students, staff, families and community to demonstrate our continued excellence and dedication to each other.

Sincerely,
Kendell R. Sprott, M.D., J.D.
Executive Director, The Matheny School