WEST MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2026-2027 School Year

Introduction: On Thursday, June 3, 2026, the New Jersey Department of Education, through a broadcast memo, issued guidance for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to submit **Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2026-2027 School Year.**

Education: The plan for the 2026-2027 school year is to have 100% of our students for a full day of age-appropriate in-person instruction, five days per week. This instruction will meet all of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. This Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program for the 2026-2027 School Year is being submitted for Board of Education and County approval, as per the June 3 memorandum from the New Jersey Department of Education.

- Masks/face coverings are optional.

- All student Individual Education Programs (IEP) will continue to receive services in the event the District shifts to a fully virtual format. Educational programming will use differentiated instruction to service the diverse needs of all students enrolled in the ELL program. Communication between the home and school will be maintained through the District's School Messenger software, email, Google Meet, and phone calls. In the event of an extended school closure, ELL staff will receive additional training in culturally responsive teaching, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching.

- The District's gifted and talented program, Learning Unlimited (LU), will continue in the event of a school closure.

- The District's Title I Program (Encore) will continue in the event of a school closure.

- When practicable, the District's co-curricular clubs and programs will be offered in a virtual setting in the event of a school closure.

- School procedures for parents notifying the school of the recording of sick days for their children shall remain the same as in previous years. If a child is experiencing any of the following, they should not be in attendance in school: fever of 100.4 degrees F or greater, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste/smell, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

- Student attendance will follow Board of Education Policy and Regulation 5200 - Attendance

• Elementary students will be provided "hand-washing/sanitizing breaks" at various intervals during the school day. At a minimum, these breaks will be before/after eating, after using the bathroom, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing one's nose.

• In the event that our schools are closed for more than three consecutive days, for a reason other than a weather event, all students will transition to fully virtual learning. Online formative assessments (Link-It, etc.) will enable staff to continuously assess student learning and growth.

• During a school building closure and subsequent shift to virtual instruction, student attendance will be monitored by staff. Students missing from virtual lessons will be marked as "absent". Students who consistently miss online classes and/or do not submit their assignments will have their parents contacted at home by various school personnel including classroom teacher, guidance counselor, case manager, administrator, etc.

• In the event of an extended school closure, the District's credit recovery programs will remain intact with students able to complete assigned coursework virtually or in-person, when school buildings reopen.

• All 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs will shift to virtual instruction. Credit recovery programs (such as summer school) will remain in place during virtual learning. All other learning opportunities will, likewise, remain in place.

• During school closure for health reasons, the District's School Age Child Care (SACC) Program will not be made available.

• During a school closure for health reasons, community programs (Scouts, youth athletics, etc.) will not be able to utilize school buildings.

School Counseling and School Psychologists: Students will have access to school counselors, social workers, and/or school psychologists every day. School-based mental health providers will be prepared to service students and meet their individual needs. Our child study teams and counselors are prepared this school year to acknowledge the potential trauma that staff and students faced throughout this pandemic. These challenges will be addressed through individual counseling, counseling groups, and social-emotional learning in the classroom. The West Milford Social, Emotional, Mental Health and Wellness Committee will meet throughout the 2026-2027 school year to assess the needs of students, staff, and the district in this area.

Technology: In order to facilitate the best instructional environment possible, the Technology Department will be deploying the following initiatives for the 2026-2027 school year.

Grade K-12 Chromebook 1 to 1: All students in grades K through 12 will be issued their own personal Chromebook. Students will be able to use the Chromebook in school and at home and will be responsible for the care and charging of their own device.

Content Filtering and Student Safety: Whether in school or at home all students are protected on their district-issued Chromebooks from inappropriate content by Securly. Securly is a 100% cloud-based web filter designed specifically for K-12 schools. It has features like safe-search in Google, YouTube and Wikipedia, and seamless integration with Google Apps For Education (GAFE). In addition to Securly's filtering solution, the district also employs Securly 24, a student safety solution that monitors student online activity for concerning behavior such as emotional distress, depression, and self-harm. Securly employs a team of highly-trained specialists and uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to analyze flagged activity and provide notifications 24 hours per day/7 days per week. A thorough risk assessment of the student is performed, identifying concerning trends and patterns. When an alert is determined to be urgent, the 24 Team follows an escalation process to notify key administrators in the district.

Google Classroom: All students in grades K-12 have access to Google Classroom for instructional collaboration and the streamlining of assignments. Google Classroom can be accessed from any device with an internet connection from home or at school.

Google Meet: Google Meet is a video-communication service integrated into GSuite. It is a critical tool used to facilitate teacher-student interaction in a distance learning environment in the event a student is quarantined at home.

ClassLink: ClassLink is a one-click single sign-on solution that gives students access to everything they need to learn, anywhere, with just one password. Accessible from any device, ClassLink simplifies access to online resources and is a valuable tool to help ensure the success of our 1:1 initiative.

Cafeteria Services: Students will be provided time to wash/sanitize their hands before/after their lunch period. Cafeteria workers must wash their hands before and after handling food service items or whenever they remove their gloves. In the event the district transitions to virtual learning, meals will be available for pickup at a central location - West Milford High School.

Health and Safety: Staff and students will self-screen daily using New Jersey Department of Health guidelines. Parents are strongly recommended to keep their child home from school if he/she presents the following symptoms: fever of 100.4 degrees F or greater, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste/smell, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Staff or students must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after they cough or blow their nose; primary grade students (PK-2) must be supervised when using hand sanitizer. All district nurses' offices have the capability to isolate a student who presents as ill during the school day.

Transportation: Masks/face coverings are optional on all district buses.

Building and Grounds: District custodial and maintenance staff will use disinfectant to clean and disinfect all our school facilities. These bleach-free, phosphate-free, noncorrosive disinfectants target broad-spectrum efficacy and are used in health care facilities, hospitals, nursing homes, surgery centers, aging care facilities, etc. Specifically, they have been proven effective in killing SARS-CoV-2. All unit-ventilators have been refurbished as part of a larger districtwide Energy Savings Improvement Plan. Weather permitting, windows will remain open to increase the flow of fresh air into all district facilities, including, but not limited to, classrooms, offices, buses, etc. Additional information about our cleaning

products is available in your child's school. Building maintenance will continue throughout an extended closure.

WMHS Athletics: WMHS Interscholastic Athletics will follow New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) guidelines for student safety.

Contact Tracing: Nurses will be in direct contact with the West Milford Township Department of Health. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the district will follow all health department reporting guidelines.

Summary: This plan is fluid and subject to change pending additional directives from the Governor and Department of Education and/or Department of Health. If they become necessary, changes will be shared with the school community. In the event that the District transitions to fully virtual learning, a complete list of essential staff will be shared with the County Office.

Respectfully Submitted,



Dr. Brian Kitchin
Superintendent of Schools