

Dear NPS Families:

I hope this communication finds you and your family well!

The Norton School Committee, Norton Teachers Association and the Norton Administration Team are pleased to present you with the Norton Public Schools Plan for Remote Learning. As a community of professional educators and life-long learners, we have never faced this type of situation and we appreciate your support as we worked diligently to develop a plan that we believe supports all students.

While we recognize that we can never replicate the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms each day, our commitment during these difficult days is to provide a sense of equity, mastery and creativity in all that we do. As we commit to every student a meaningful learning experience, we understand that the education provided is not typical and that every student learns differently. We have also focused on mastery learning by providing a deeper dive into content and topics that have been completed, as well an introduction to new standards that we believe are essential to the next level. As important, we will have our highly trained and qualified staff collaborate and provide for creative and authentic learning that goes beyond the traditional classroom setting. Our NPS Remote Learning Plan is our promise to continuously work to make this a time for learning and of learning for every student.

The district is proud of our Portrait of a Graduate that was created last year with the input of families, staff, students and administrators. The six competencies of personal responsibility and accountability; social and cross-cultural skills; creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; flexibility and adaptability; and information, communication, and technology literacy provided within this document are more essential to our students today than when we started implementing them this past spring and early fall.

Lastly, no one could have imagined where we are today with the pandemic. However, you have our collective commitment to not only be fluid and flexible but most importantly to remind all of us that the health and well-being of our students and colleagues is priority one.

Please stay healthy!

Regards,

Kathleen Stern  
Norton School Committee

Shannon Taylor  
NTA President

Joseph F. Baeta  
Superintendent of Schools

# N NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## REMOTE LEARNING PLAN

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# Portrait of a Norton Graduate



	Personal Responsibility & Accountability	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind.</li> <li>Demonstrate personal integrity, honesty and ethical behavior.</li> </ul>
	Social & Cross-Cultural Skills	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work and community contexts.</li> <li>Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak.</li> <li>Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner.</li> <li>Respect cultural differences and work effectively with people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds.</li> <li>Leverage social and cultural differences to create new ideas and increase both innovation and quality of work.</li> </ul>
	Creativity & Innovation	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming, divergent &amp; convergent thinking).</li> <li>Elaborate, refine, analyze and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts.</li> <li>Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.</li> <li>View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small success and frequent mistakes.</li> <li>Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.</li> </ul>
	Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect, assess and analyze relevant information.</li> <li>Reason effectively.</li> <li>Use systems thinking.</li> <li>Make sound judgements and decisions.</li> <li>Identify, define and solve authentic problems and essential questions.</li> <li>Reflect critically on learning experiences, processes and solutions.</li> </ul>
	Flexibility & Adaptability	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt to varied roles, jobs, responsibilities, schedules and contexts.</li> <li>Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.</li> <li>Incorporate feedback effectively.</li> <li>Deal positively with praise, setbacks and criticism.</li> <li>Understand, negotiate and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach workable solutions, particularly in multi-cultural environments.</li> </ul>
	Information, Communication & Technology Literacy	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use digital technology, communications tools, and/or networks to assess, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information in order to function in a knowledge society.</li> <li>Apply a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access and use of information technologies.</li> </ul>

# Remote Learning at Norton Public Schools

## Purpose of Remote Learning

As a district, we have long promoted the importance of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) as a core component of our mission, along with supporting the needs of the whole child. During this time of extended school closure, we believe that it is essential for all students to remain connected to their school and their classmates, while at the same time continuing to enrich their academic experiences. This plan for remote learning is intended to be guidance for students, families, and staff as we attempt to navigate an unprecedented situation.

Remote learning in Norton has been designed to encourage a balance of teacher directed and student directed learning that will provide students with an opportunity to reinforce and deepen their mastery of standards and content that have already been taught, while at the same time introducing key concepts that are essential for the next level. We also note that remote learning is not synonymous with digital learning and that there are many meaningful and productive opportunities for students to broaden their understanding and apply their knowledge to the real-world.

When planning for remote learning, we have asked our Norton teachers and staff to consider equity, mastery, and creativity for all students. Equity speaks to the importance of ALL teachers designing lessons and activities that ALL students will be able to access and participate in. Regardless of their role, our educators will be providing support to all of our students through their planning and office hours. In mastery, we acknowledge that there will be some “content” that may not be covered during this time, but instead have asked for deeper learning experiences that can engage students and allow them the opportunity to apply their understanding. Creativity gives teachers permission to use their skills and passion to make learning meaningful and to engage their students’ interests. We are not confined by mandates and testing at this time, and we hope they will take full advantage!

Remote learning is not intended to replicate the teaching and learning that takes place within our classrooms each day. The dynamics that occur between teachers and students cannot be recreated in a limited format, nor can we expect parents to take on the role of their child’s teachers. As educators, we often talk to our students about having a “growth mindset” or the belief that one can enhance their intelligence and talents with hard work and perseverance. We challenge them to use the word “yet” in their statements (“I can’t divide fractions- yet!”). Our transition to remote learning is the most powerful demonstration that we can provide to our children of these qualities. Their teachers, parents, and friends will be learning alongside them and supporting each other through this process. We thank you for your support and understanding as we model a growth mindset for our students, knowing that as much as we try it will not be perfect. Our intention is to continue to communicate and ask you for your feedback so that we can continue to meet the emotional and academic needs of our students during this time.

## Remote Learning Guidance for Students and Families

On **Monday, April 6, 2020**, we will begin remote learning in the Norton Public Schools. You may hear from your teachers this week as we prepare for the launch of remote learning, and you should feel free to share your thoughts about how this new environment will impact your child.

During each week, students can be expected to be engaged in learning and assignments from their teachers for approximately half of a regular school day. This may include completing assignments, selecting activities from a choice board, participating in a class discussion, or working on a project among other things. The majority of the work has been designed to be done independently. Parents should expect to provide the same level of support they would provide for homework, with an understanding that younger students may require more support to get started.

All students will be responsible for completing the work assigned and submitting to their teacher(s) as directed. In grades PreK-8, students will not be graded as they have been throughout the year, but instead given credit for completion. Each building staff will be incentivizing learning for our students in order to ensure maximum engagement through this time. At the high school, students will be graded on a modified ranking system that is still being determined. As recommendations are finalized for the high school, Mr. Dolleman will be communicating the specifics to families.

Families can find student assignments by visiting the [NPS Learns Website](#) and clicking on the “Remote Learning” tab. From there, specific tabs and links will direct you to each school and/or grade level. Our students in Grades 3-12 were provided with their district issued chromebooks to use while at home, so the majority of the work will utilize Google Classroom as a starting point. Our students in PreK-2 will be given weekly “choice boards” to direct their learning. If you are in need of a paper version of these choice boards and the accompanying resources, please email the Office of Teaching & Learning at [panderson@norton.k12.ma.us](mailto:panderson@norton.k12.ma.us) or by calling 508-285-0100 x 2.

We understand that each family could have unique challenges during this time and that as the weeks go on, health and safety concerns may compete with the remote learning that your child is expected to complete. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child’s teacher or principal to communicate any challenges or needs that your family may have.

### **Our Expectations for NPS Staff during Remote Learning**

Over the last few weeks, our NPS staff has been working remotely to design learning opportunities for all students, while at the same time balancing the same commitments of family and health that we are all juggling. As we enter this period of remote learning, we want you to know that our teachers and staff are here for you and your child in the following ways:

- Preparing resources, materials, and assignments to be posted at least weekly to keep all students engaged and reviewing content/standards along with introducing essential concepts for the next level
- Daily hosting of a morning and afternoon “office hour.” During this office hour staff will be available for quick response to students and families, answering questions, providing clarification and feedback on assignments.
- Communicating regularly with students to maintain relationships and a sense of belonging within our school community.
- Collaborating and planning amongst staff to ensure that ALL NPS students can access content and are provided equitable opportunities for learning during this time away from school.

A full listing of responsibilities for our staff can be viewed [here](#). The district will update these expectations as needed.

# **Special Education Supports**

## **Individual Remote Learning Plans**

Special Education Staff, counselors and therapists are collaborating to develop individual remote learning plans for students. These plans will provide families with information regarding staff office hours, virtual classroom meetings as well as a schedule for when staff will be in direct contact with families to check in, support with building schedules for home, help with activities, etc. The individual remote learning plans will include multidisciplinary learning activities and assignments designed around student's IEP goals and benchmarks.

Special education staff at all levels will be providing office hours via email and virtual meetings. During these office hours families and students will have the ability to reach out to ask questions, gain clarification on assigned activities or request strategies to support the learning. These office hours are not meant to be parent conferences.

## **Virtual Team Meetings**

The District recognizes that there are several IEP meetings that need to be scheduled or were cancelled due to the school closure. The Team Chairpeople will be in touch with those families who have meetings that are due to coordinate scheduling virtual meetings. If families are not able to attend a virtual meeting, we will do our best to coordinate a conference call. District staff will do our best to coordinate all members of the team to be present, when this is not possible we will request families permission via a waiver of attendance at the meeting and will help to facilitate a time for the parent to speak with the absent team member regarding their concerns. There are some cases that involve many staff members and will be difficult to navigate in a virtual environment, we will be in contact with those families to schedule a meeting when school returns.

The District will provide families with an electronic version of the proposed IEP within 5 school days of the virtual team meeting. It is important to note that due to the COVID-19 school closure, the newly proposed IEP will not be fully implemented until school re-opens.

Prior to the school closure there were several initial evaluations and reevaluations to be completed. Unfortunately due to social distancing requirements and school closure these assessments cannot be completed until school reopens. In some cases the team will not be able to complete the evaluations until the next school year. For students who are due for re-evaluations, the team will convene virtually for an annual review with the re-evaluation taking place as soon as possible within the next school year.

# Technology & Digital Resources

The technology department distributed chromebooks that were previously on classroom carts to students in grades 3-5 to assist with remote learning. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide devices to students in grades K-2 because we simply don't have enough to provide for all students. Students in grades 6-12 participate in the district's 1:1 chromebook program and should have their devices with them.

If any student in grades 3-12 has a problem with their school issued chromebook during the school closure, please contact the technology department through Let's Talk found on our district and school websites. We will respond as quickly as possible providing technical support or a replacement device as needed. If parents/guardians have a technology related question and need help, please reach out! We'll do our best to help you navigate the digital experiences.

To facilitate communication between students and teachers in grades 3-5, we have enabled school email in the upper elementary grades. Students usually receive email when they enter middle school but, due to these challenging times, we believe email will be an appropriate means of communication between staff and students. The email settings allow students to receive emails only from others within the Norton Public Schools.

Teachers may conduct virtual face-to-face meetings with students. Two tools that may be used are Google Meet and Zoom. In both cases, students will be provided a link by the teacher to access their meeting. Teachers may post the links in Google Classroom or they might send the links to students by email. Both Google Meet and Zoom have agreed to abide by the Massachusetts Student Data Privacy agreement.

There are many concerns regarding the use of video conferencing tools with our students. Please know that we have followed best practice security guidelines for setting up the programs for Norton staff and students. In Zoom, teachers or meeting hosts are required to admit attendees from a waiting room to prevent unknown guests from joining. Also, only hosts are allowed to share their screens and the chat feature is controlled by the meeting host. Zoom meetings will require a password to join and attendees' video is disabled upon entry. Using Google Meet, teachers can require attendees to have a norton.k12.ma.us account to participate. This can limit attendance to only those within the Norton Public Schools. Google Meet also provides for automatic closed captioning while sessions are in progress.

Please review the following online meeting guidelines and expectations with your child/children. We encourage all students to fully participate in online meetings but to also be respectful of classmates just as if they were in their regular classrooms.

## Elementary Online Class Meeting Expectations

 Online Class Meeting Expectations 

 <p>Arrive on time (when possible)</p>	 <p>Find a quiet, distraction free spot to learn. Pay attention to your background.</p>
 <p>Mute your microphone</p>	 <p>Be attentive and listen to your teacher and classmates</p>
 <p>Wear earbuds or headset (if possible)</p>	 <p>Be prepared with materials for learning</p>
 <p>Unmute your microphone when it is your turn to speak</p>	 <p>Follow class behavior expectations</p>
 <p>Respect privacy - no photo or video recordings allowed</p>	

## Secondary Online Meeting Guidelines

### **For Teachers**

1. Before starting with the first official class meeting, take time to make sure each student understands how to mute, unmute, and use comments.
2. Consider this platform as an opportunity for connection and conversation.
3. During each session, allow each attendee an opportunity to speak.
4. Don't use this platform for lectures or one-sided communication.
5. Facilitate student-student interaction as much as possible.
6. Keep calls under one hour and allow students to come and go as needed.
7. Captions can be turned on as needed in Google Meet.
8. Establish hand signals for whole group responses.
9. Do not take screenshots or pictures of your meetings unless you have parental permission.
10. Be the last person to leave the virtual meeting.

### **For Students**

1. Keep your microphone muted unless you are speaking. Each student is in charge of their own microphone.
2. Use the comments area for messages that are on-topic for the discussion.
3. Only share your screen when asked to do so by the teacher.
4. Take turns and do not interrupt others when speaking.
5. If you turn off your video during calls for privacy for your household, be sure that your profile picture is school appropriate.
6. You may use headphones if you have them, but they are not required.

7. Please be aware that you are video chatting into people's homes and the teachers' homes. Appropriate dress, drinks, behavior, decoration, etc. should be considered for all participants.
8. All items posted in the chat box in Google Meet can be seen by teachers. Chats will be directed and moderated by teachers.
9. School rules, classroom respect, and decorum apply.
10. If a student is consistently disruptive or inappropriate and cannot be redirected by the teacher, a warning will be given to the student. If disruptive behavior continues, the student may be removed from the video session, and/or the session may be ended for all participants.
11. If this happens, the building Principal, Assistant Principal or Dean will be called to address the situation. Note: student accounts cannot remove or mute other attendants in a Meet session.
12. Students should not record or take pictures during a video conference session.

### **For Parents/Guardians**

1. All video calls are for students & teachers not parents/guardians. We know parents may be in the room or even in view but they should not participate in the chat. We understand that students with certain needs may require redirection by parents, but please let the teacher direct the students.
2. Imagine doing your job while on display this way. Try to see the immense pressure this puts on our staff. At the same time, enjoy them. They are brilliant and dedicated.
3. Please make sure the view behind your child during a video chat is what you want seen by the class.
4. We are all new to this; be patient, assume the best. We will listen to your feedback.

## **Student and Family Supports**

### **Food Services**

The district will provide a breakfast pack and a lunch pack to families for each child residing in the home. The pick-up location is at the back of Norton High School, and is available between the hours of **9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday each week** that the schools are closed for COVID-19. Please note that the Thursday pick-up will provide two meal sets per child as the school district will be closed on Fridays. Gluten free and allergy sensitive meals are available - just let the food service employee at the school know when you arrive that you require this option.

It is very important that when you pull up to the back of the High school please do not exit your vehicle. The food service employee will come to your window with the food packets.

Please contact Matt Wells, School Business Administrator, directly if you have any questions or concerns: [mwells@norton.k12.ma.us](mailto:mwells@norton.k12.ma.us).

### **How can students/families get more help from Guidance and/or Adjustment Counselors?**

If you would like to connect with your Guidance and/or Adjustment Counselor individually about an academic or personal matter, please email your counselor directly to set up a time. Each counselor

across the district will also be establishing “office hours” where they will be available to answer emails or return phone calls in a timely manner. Counselors will also be contacting families and older students that they have previously been working with to begin remote SEL learning and to assist with issues or concerns. If you would like a call back from a counselor please email them.

Finally, counselors at all levels will be teaming up with teachers to help to ensure that social emotional learning is embedded in many of the remote learning activities and lessons as possible.

### **How can families get more assistance or provide assistance with basic needs?**

Norton Public Schools is working with other agencies and private donors to provide assistance to families and elders in our town that may need support during these difficult times. A number of people have reached out to ask us how they can help. In order to help us organize and plan, we are sending out two forms.

If you are interested in providing assistance in any manner, please fill this out so we can start mobilizing our resources:

- NPS - Assistance to the Community due to COVID-19 Restrictions

If your family is in need of assistance due to the COVID-19 closings, please complete this form:

- NPS Family Request for Assistance Due to COVID-19 Restrictions

The forms will be submitted electronically to the Superintendent's Office. The NPS Leadership Team and our partners will work to coordinate resources and get them to our families/elders that need it. This is not a guarantee of support, however, we will do all we can to connect our Norton Families to resources that may be helpful. We are finalizing the process and will do our best to get assistance out as quickly as possible.

### **What resources are available for mental health and wellbeing?**

A number of the Directors of Social Emotional Learning from school districts across the state have partnered up to bring you information and resources on how to take care of your child’s mental health during this time. Please visit this [website](#):

Additional resources can be accessed through the following hotlines:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Call2Talk: 1-508-532-2255 or Text C2T to 741741
- Samaritans: 800-252-TEEN (8336)
- [Compass Helpline - NAMI MASS](#): 617-704-6264 or 1-800-370-9085
- Parent Stress Hotline: Available 24/7, 1-800-632-8188
- [Parents Helping Parents](#)

# **Norton High School Topics**

## **How will we work with students who are at risk for course failure, retention and/or failure to graduate?**

NHS staff members are working together to identify students who are at academic risk and create intervention plans that will be best suited to their needs. We will continue to do so through the remainder of the school closure and school year. Guidance Counselors will be reaching out to students via email and/or phone to communicate these plans in the near future. Seniors at risk for not graduating will be the priority in the coming week.

Students may be assigned to work on alternate credit recovery options that meet their needs.

## **Will the third quarter be extended? What will happen to third quarter grades?**

Quarter Grades: We will combine Quarters 3 and 4. We are currently working with our partners at School Brains to determine how that will be documented on report cards and transcripts.

## **How will terms be weighted?**

Full-year Courses: With the combination of Quarters 3 and 4 and the elimination of final exams. It was announced that final grades for year long classes would be calculated using the following formula: Q1 - 30%, Q2 - 30%, MYE - 10% and Q3/4 - 30%. However, this may change as we work with our partners at School Brains to determine the best mathematical ratio to ensure no or limited impact to first semester grades and current GPAs.

Semester Courses: The combined Quarter 3 and 4 grades will count as 100% of the Semester 2 grade.

## **What is going on with AP tests? How can we get support with AP Classes?**

As of Friday, March 20th, The College Board has decided to forgo face-to-face testing in order to provide at-home testing options. The College Board has also decided to limit the content and skills covered in the exams to what would have been covered by early March. You can read their most recent update [here](#). Norton will be discussing these developments in order to understand their implications for our teachers and students.

The College Board will also continuously update the following webpage that includes some online learning opportunities for review: [College Board Coronavirus Updates w/ Courses](#)

Free AP Review: <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/coronavirus-updates#free-ap-classes>

## **What is happening with MCAS at NHS?**

ELA MCAS was scheduled to take place on March 24th and 25th. At this time, it is unclear what the state of Massachusetts plans to do with Grade 10 MCAS. On Tuesday [the Governor filed legislation](#) stating "The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education would also be allowed to modify or waive the MCAS testing requirement". If that legislation is enacted, the Commissioner will make a

determination about MCAS. As soon as we have more information, we will pass it on to students and families.

## **Other Frequently Asked Questions**

### **High School and Middle School - Is the scheduling process for 2020-2021 still underway?**

We had extended the time that the community portal was open so that students could make their selections. The portal is now closed. Starting on April 6th Guidance Counselors at both the High School and Middle School will be reviewing each student's selections and recommendations. The High School Guidance Counselors will be reaching out to virtually meet with students on their caseload. This could be via email, phone or Google meet. Middle School counselors will be finalizing schedules and reaching out to students if there are issues, questions or concerns.

### **Are your facilities open for regular school business?**

All school buildings and school grounds, including the NHS track, are closed to the public. There is a dropbox available outside of the Superintendent's Office for any mail needing to be dropped off. For urgent issues please visit [www.norton.k12.ma.us/about-us/lets-talk](http://www.norton.k12.ma.us/about-us/lets-talk).

### **Where can I get additional information regarding NPS and COVID-19?**

For up-to-date information and resources, please refer to the NPS website ([www.norton.k12.ma.us/families/coronavirus-covid-19-updates](http://www.norton.k12.ma.us/families/coronavirus-covid-19-updates)).