



**Morgan Hill Unified School District**  
**15600 Concord Circle**  
**Morgan Hill, CA 95037**  
**408-201-6040**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

Dear Parents,

4/20/2020

We recognize that our students are a vulnerable population during this change to remote instruction. Our team of dedicated professionals has been working to stay connected, create some normalcy, combat isolation and support your family to minimize the negative impact caused by the recent school closure. This letter is intended to provide an overview of the district special education plan during this distance learning time. Your student's plan will be specific to services on his or her IEP. We thank you for your flexibility and communication with our teams during this process. Our teachers spent many hours ensuring all their students knew the new expectations for learning, and were able to connect and engage in the learning being offered.

We do not expect to replace school or even match instruction hour for hour. We recognize that no online learning environment can possibly replicate the face-to-face classroom experience. Some IEP goals may have to be put on hold if they require a large social group or classroom environment. Some specialists may be serving your child with more frequency at first to ensure access to their general education environment, and access to core instruction. We also recognize that some students are not able to tolerate remote services, and we will work to provide support to you in every way possible during this "shelter in place" order.

In an attempt to answer questions for you all, we would like you to utilize the district email here ([SpEd-group@mhusd.org](mailto:SpEd-group@mhusd.org)) to ask questions about programming that you are still unsure of. We ask that if you have questions specific to your own child, that you address those with case managers first. This email is for general questions about closure at this time.

This is a new frontier for us all. We have trained our teams on delivering therapy via on-line platforms, worked with each group of similar service providers to brainstorm effective on-line instructional practices, remote supports for students, and engaged our classroom assistants to be part of the support team for students. As we continue this distance learning platform, we pledge to continue our partnership with you as we focus on the academic rigor and goal progress with students. Thank you for your support, communication and resilience during this most stressful time. Please be safe.

Best Wishes,

Dr. Rebecca O'Brien  
Special Education Director, MHUSD

## **COVID-19 School Closures and Services to Students with Disabilities from the California Department of Education (CDE)**

The United States is currently experiencing a pandemic emergency due to the threat of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 13, 2020, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-26-20 requiring the California Department of Education (CDE) to issue guidance on several topics, including ensuring students with disabilities (SWD) receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) consistent with their individualized education program (IEP) and meeting other procedural requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and California law. Initial guidance on services to students with disabilities was provided on March 20, 2020.

In order to address the needs of the students who receive special education, all service providers (teachers, SLPs, APEs, Therapists, Behaviorists, etc.) will adhere and adapt themselves to following guidelines as they pertain to implementing a Distance Learning program for the students on their caseloads. Guidelines will continue to be adapted in order to remain current with regulations put forth by the California Department of Education (CDE).

### **Definition of Distance Learning**

Students engage in learning and make academic progress when they are not physically present in schools. This is accomplished using a variety of digital and print resources, and differentiated modes of interaction with teachers (and peers, when possible). How teachers engage students in distance learning is informed by the student's access to technology and the internet.

### **Digital Distance Approach**

- Teachers engage students digitally when we have confirmation that a student has a device/ internet access at home.
- With this confirmation, the teacher interacts with the student using digital resources (Google Classroom, Zoom, etc.)
- Students submit work electronically or as directed by their teachers.

### **Print-Based Distance Approach**

- If a student does not have a device or internet access, the teacher engages that student in print-based learning (text books, work packets, etc.)
- Teachers make group or individual calls (typically phone calls) to students to teach and check in on work.
- Students submit work at designated check-points or at the end of the closure as directed by their teachers

## Distance Learning Plans General Descriptions

<b>Specialized Academic Instruction</b>	Our SAI teachers will continue to provide activities informed by the IEP goal areas, and services may be implemented to support group or individual needs. Students will have online and off-line learning interactions with their special education teacher and instructional assistant as appropriate. Tools for learning can include the use of google classroom, video-conferencing, live or pre-recorded lessons, mailed packets of materials, content specific-activities or programs for reading comprehension or general skills in math and writing to support students accessing their classroom program. For our students with more significant needs and our younger students, SAI teachers may send or deliver individualized materials to students and provide coaching to parents related to structured learning tasks and developing routines.
<b>Speech - Language</b>	Group or individual sessions will focus on students' IEP goals around language, articulation, and/or pragmatics. Tools for learning can include language skill activities focused on vocabulary and language development, teletherapy through the use of google meet or zoom, delivery of printed materials individualized to the student's needs, parent consultation to apply speech-techniques or other goal-related activities, and to support the use of low-tech communication or augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC).
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	Individualized sessions will focus on activities related to their gross motor, fine motor, or sensory needs. Service delivery includes teletherapy with the student, providing individualized materials, consultation by phone, email, or video-conferencing with parents and/or IEP team members in implementing goal-related activities.
<b>Mental Health Counseling</b>	Individualized sessions will focus on social/emotional goals and will be provided by either the student's school psychologist or counselor as appropriate to IEP. Delivery can be either by teleconferencing or secured video-conferencing platforms. They will continue to directly teach the skills and strategies to students and/or provide consultation to parents to help generalize their social/emotional skills at home.
<b>Related Services such as Adapted PE/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services/Vision Services, etc.</b>	Our related service providers will continue to provide consultative services based upon the individualized needs of the students. Consultation with staff and/or parents will be focused on ensuring access to distance learning and/or goal-related activities.

## IEP Meetings

The United States Department of Education and California Department of Education state that guidelines under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have not been waived. Therefore, IEPs should continue to the best of abilities in light of the school closures. MHUSD continues to hold IEP meetings via Zoom, and will work with families to find times and dates that work for their at-home needs. Our specialists will proceed with the historical information that they have, and current information they can get through the distance learning platform, to develop present levels, goals in the areas of need, and a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) offer of placement and services for when school is in session. Some IEPs may have to be updated when school resumes. For those meetings requiring assessment, some will continue with the information they have (informal assessment, present levels, file reviews) and update assessments the team determines are further needed when school resumes. Teams will update the Distance Learning Plan as needed for students after the IEP meeting.

**Guidelines for virtual meetings**

- Be present, visually and mentally
- Make sure your camera is on and you are aware of your surroundings
- Mute phone when you are not speaking
- Leave keyboard alone (unless you have the phone muted)
- Use the chat box as needed
- Prepare to contribute and provide feedback
- No recording of meetings