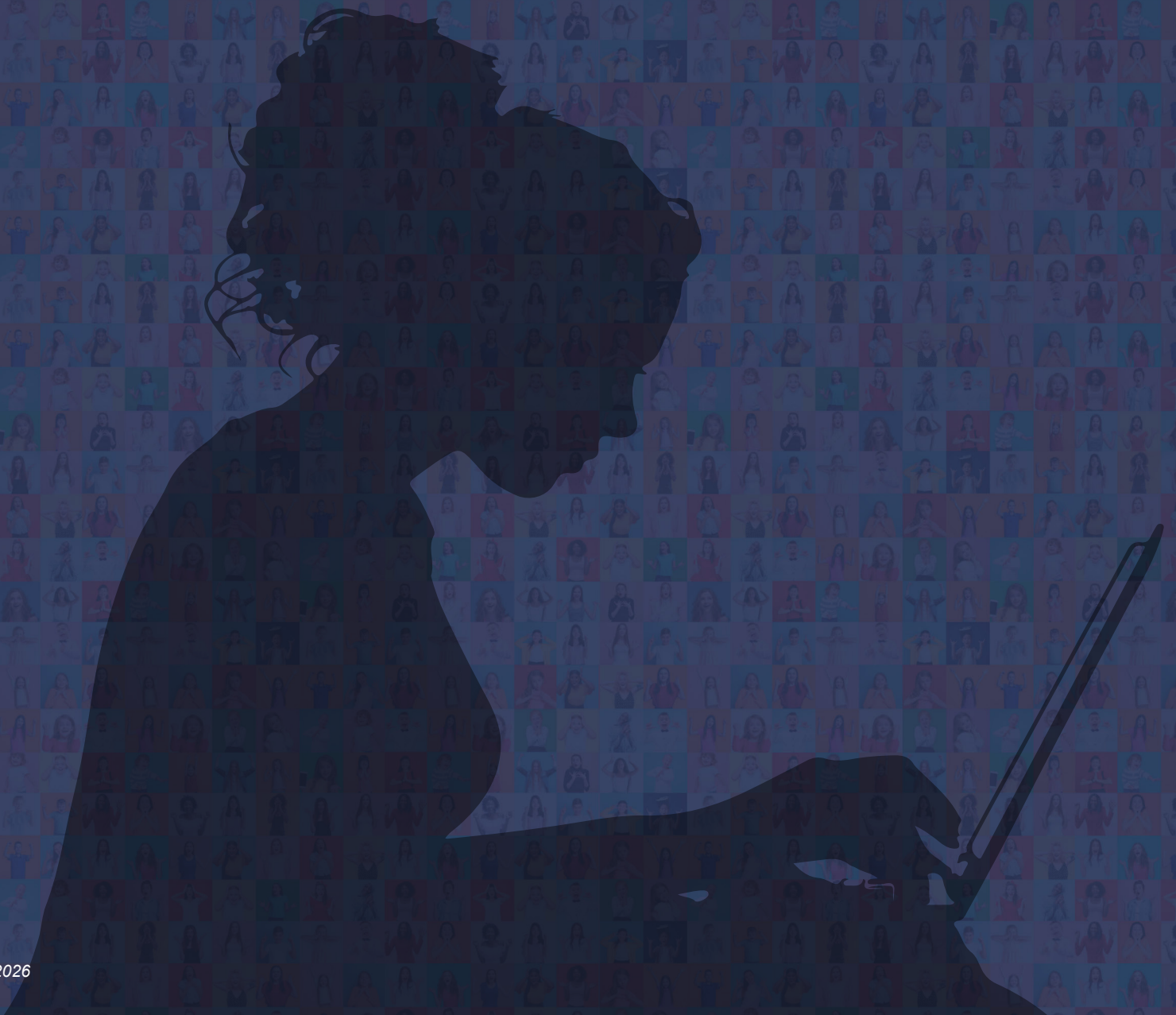
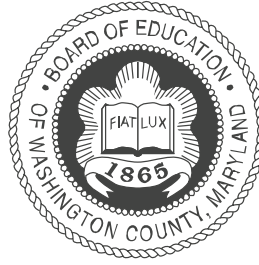


WCPS | Washington County Public Schools

# INCLEMENT WEATHER VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

— PLAN FOR POST-MAKEUP DAYS —





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# INCLEMENT WEATHER

# VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

## — PLAN FOR POST-MAKEUP DAYS —

### PURPOSE

This document outlines procedures to be followed when inclement weather occurs after all allotted makeup days have been exhausted and instruction transitions to a virtual learning day. These procedures align with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) guidance on [Virtual Education for Severe Weather Conditions, 2024–2025](#). The WCPS Virtual Instruction Plan will be reviewed annually and following any implementation of Virtual Instruction Days to ensure compliance with COMAR, MSDE guidance, and district expectations. Revisions will be made as necessary to address identified areas of need and to ensure consistent implementation across schools.

### GOVERNANCE, APPROVAL & PUBLIC NOTICE

#### ***Before the implementation of Virtual Instruction Days:***

- *The Washington County Board of Education (WCBOE) will discuss the Virtual Instruction Plan at a public meeting.*
- *The Board will vote to authorize the Superintendent to implement Virtual Instruction Days during severe weather events.*
- *The approved plan will be published on the WCPS website.*
- *Opportunities for public comment will be provided prior to final approval.*

#### ***Virtual Instruction Days may be implemented only when:***

- *All calendar-incorporated inclement weather makeup days have been used;*
- *The Board has authorized the Superintendent to call Virtual Instruction Days; and*
- *The Superintendent determines that severe weather is likely to prevent normal attendance.*

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Virtual Instruction Days are implemented only after all inclement weather closure days built into the school calendar have been exhausted. When severe weather is expected to prevent normal attendance, the Superintendent may designate the day as a Virtual Instruction Day.

### Virtual Instruction Days:

- Count as official school days.
- Are designed to mirror in-person instructional expectations as closely as possible in a virtual format.
- Include four (4) hours of synchronous instruction.
- Do not utilize late arrivals or early dismissals.
- Require staff to plan for the possibility that school buildings may be inaccessible.

## WEATHER STATUS DESIGNATIONS

- **RED DAY**  
The Virtual Instruction Plan is not in effect. All schools and offices are closed.
- **VIRTUAL DAY**  
The WCPS Virtual Instruction Plan is in effect. Unit 1 employees (teachers, counselors, related service providers, etc.) will provide virtual instruction according to the expectations outlined in this plan.

# VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION DAY COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

### When a Virtual Instruction Day is declared:

- Superintendent designee will notify school administrators as soon as the decision is made.
- Principals will coordinate with staff, students, and families regarding logistics and instructions for the Virtual Learning Day.
- WCPS will communicate using all available platforms, including:
  - Mass notifications system
  - WCPS website homepage
  - District social media channels
  - Local media outlets
- When possible, advance notice may be provided the day prior to a potential weather event to allow staff and families to prepare devices and materials.

# SPECIAL EDUCATION & 504 SERVICES DURING VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION DAYS

- All special education services will continue as outlined in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Services may be delivered:
  - Synchronously
  - Through supplemental materials posted in Google Classroom
  - In whole-group virtual settings
  - One-on-one via Google Meet
- Services provided will follow the Emergency Conditions section of the student's IEP.
- All services remain a priority, including:
  - Specially designed instruction

- Related services
- Supplementary aids and services
- Secondary transition services
- Adult Support in the Home
  - When a student’s IEP requires adult facilitation for access to instruction and such support is unavailable in the home during a Virtual Instruction Day, the case manager will document the barrier and communicate with the family regarding next steps. Services that cannot be delivered under these circumstances will be addressed through a make-up plan upon return to in-person instruction.
- District Oversight & Consistency
  - The Department of Special Education will provide guidance to ensure consistent implementation of IEP and 504 services across schools. Service documentation and delivery practices may be reviewed following Virtual Instruction Days to ensure compliance and equitable implementation.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES FOR VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION DAYS

- Attendance will be taken for all students during each Virtual Instruction Day.
- Students will have opportunities to make up missed work upon returning to in-person instruction.
- Students With Internet Access:
  - Students must join live synchronous instruction via Google Meet to be counted present.
  - A minimum of four (4) hours of synchronous instruction will be provided.
  - Attendance will be recorded in Synergy.
- Students Without Reliable Internet Access:
  - Paper assignments will be provided prior to the Virtual Instruction Day when possible.
  - Students will be marked present if they submit completed work upon returning to school.
- If advance work cannot be provided:
  - Students will be granted two additional school days to submit work and be counted as present.
  - If the work is not submitted within the allowed timeframe, the student will be marked absent.
  - If work is submitted on the next scheduled school day, attendance must be changed from absent to present.

### ATTENDANCE DEFINITIONS

#### PRESENT —

##### Evidence must include:

- Participation in scheduled Google Meet instruction
- Camera on during live instruction

#### SECONDARY SCHOOLS

- Students must attend at least half of a class period to be present (example: 30 minutes of a 60-minute class).
- Attendance is taken each period.

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Two (2) or more hours of synchronous instruction = Full day present
- Thirty (30) minutes to two (2) hours = Half-day present
- Less than 30 minutes = Absent for the day

#### ABSENT

- No participation in the scheduled Google Meet instruction
- Camera not turned on during instruction\*

#### ABSENCE CODE

- Code 07 (Hazardous Weather)
  - Used for students who do not attend virtual synchronous classes
  - Counts as an excused absence

*\* While students are generally expected to have cameras on during synchronous instruction, teachers may exercise professional discretion when a student’s documented disability impacts their ability to participate with the camera on.*

# I. TEACHERS

## TEACHERS WILL:

- Work remotely from home or another approved alternate location.
- Provide a minimum of four (4) hours of synchronous instruction during the virtual day.
- Set up a Google Meet link and share it with students and school administration.
- Synchronous instruction may include:
  - Standards-aligned instruction that introduces or advances student learning. Teachers must provide opportunities for student interaction, questioning, and demonstration of learning.
  - Whole-group synchronous lessons
  - Small-group instruction or interventions
  - Scheduled virtual office hours where students are expected to log in, and teachers are actively available
  - Individual or small-group student conferences
- Post assignments and learning materials in the Google Classroom to support instruction.
- All virtual instruction must comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), student privacy requirements, and district acceptable use policies. Teachers will use district-approved platforms only.
- Asynchronous activities may supplement instruction but may not replace required synchronous instructional time.

- Take attendance during synchronous instructional blocks in accordance with WCPS and MSDE requirements.
- Communicate schedules, expectations, and access links clearly to students and families.

## Special Education Documentation Requirement:

- Case managers and service providers will document services delivered. Ongoing communication with families will occur. For students with complex disabilities, intensive medical needs, or services requiring physical prompting, specialized equipment, or direct physical support, the IEP case manager, in consultation with related service providers and the building administrator, will determine whether virtual delivery is appropriate. If virtual delivery is not appropriate, services will be documented as “unable to deliver due to emergency closure, and a make-up plan will be developed.

*NOTE: Elementary Encore instruction will continue through each school’s scheduled synchronous learning sessions. Encore teachers will provide live instruction aligned to their content areas during these scheduled times. Each school will develop and communicate a specific schedule for Encore staff to ensure consistency, student access, and instructional continuity across all grade levels.*

# II. PARAPROFESSIONALS / INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

## PARAPROFESSIONALS, TUTORS, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WILL:

- Join the instructional day remotely.
- Paraprofessionals will provide support during Virtual Instruction Days under the supervision of the assigned teacher or case manager.
- 1:1 paraprofessionals will prioritize support of their assigned student.
- Supervising teachers will provide direction regarding schedules and responsibilities.
- Services provided will be documented in accordance with district procedures.
- Provide small-group or individual support in virtual breakout rooms when assigned.

## III. OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ESP STAFF

### NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ESP STAFF WILL:

- Follow the supervisor's direction regarding virtual duties.
- Perform assigned duties remotely when feasible.
- If not assigned duties, be provided opportunities to make up work consistent with negotiated agreements and MSDE guidance
- Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) and Transportation staff will not report or work on Virtual Instruction Days unless otherwise directed. These employees will be provided the opportunity to make up missed work time in accordance with negotiated agreements and district procedures, including end-of-year make-up days if necessary.

## IV. ADMINISTRATORS

### ADMINISTRATORS WILL:

- Follow the Administrator and Supervisor Telework Agreement, as needed.
- Communicate the schedule to parents/guardians/staff.
- Monitor instruction, attendance, and staff participation.
- Assign classroom coverage as needed to ensure 4 hours of synchronous instruction.
- Ensure compliance with MSDE virtual education requirements.
- Support staff, students, and families during the virtual day.
- Ensure continuity of services for special populations.

## V. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are expected to engage appropriately during synchronous instruction, following school norms for participation, behavior, and digital citizenship.
- Students will participate in four (4) hours of synchronous instruction.
- Attendance will be taken during Synchronous instruction.
- Students will keep their cameras on during instruction and ensure their backgrounds are blurred.
- Students without internet access will be allowed to submit assignments up to two (2) days after a closure and will be counted as present for class.

## VI. PLANNING & PREPAREDNESS

### SCHOOLS WILL:

- Maintain updated virtual schedules and contact lists.
- Ensure staff and students are trained on [Google Classroom](#) and [Google Meet](#) before inclement weather events.
- Prepare instructions that can be implemented with little notice.
- Send home devices and chargers.

## VII. MSDE COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

### THIS PLAN COMPLIES WITH MARYLAND EDUCATION ARTICLE §7-103.2 AND MSDE GUIDANCE:

- Virtual instruction is used only after calendar makeup days are exhausted.
- Instruction includes at least four (4) hours of synchronous learning.
- Attendance is taken, and instructional continuity is maintained.
- IEPs and required student services are addressed.

# VIII. VIRTUAL LEARNING DAY: STAFF PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

THIS SECTION PROVIDES OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR WCPS STAFF WHEN A VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION DAY IS IMPLEMENTED DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER:

- **Advance Notice & Decision-Making**

WCPS will make every reasonable effort to provide advance notice to school administrators when forecasted conditions indicate the potential need for a Virtual Instruction Day. This early notification is intended to allow schools and staff to prepare students, ensure devices and materials are sent home, and confirm readiness for virtual instruction.

The official decision to move to a Virtual Instruction Day may be made the morning of the weather event based on updated conditions. Once the decision is finalized, WCPS will notify staff and families through established communication channels, including the mass notifications platform, the WCPS website, social media, and local media outlets.

- **Preparation for Virtual Instruction**

To ensure continuity of learning, instructional staff will:

- Maintain at least two (2) consecutive days of virtual-ready lessons in the district learning management system.
- Prepare alternative instructional materials or emergency packets for students without reliable internet access, when appropriate.
- Ensure students are familiar with accessing virtual platforms and routines prior to any inclement weather event.

- **Instructional Schedules**

In accordance with Maryland statute and MSDE guidance, all Virtual Instruction Days include a minimum of four (4) hours of synchronous instruction. WCPS elementary and secondary virtual schedules are structured to meet this requirement while allowing for age-appropriate breaks and transitions between learning activities.

- **Teacher Workday Structure**

Following the scheduled synchronous instructional blocks, teachers will have time for lunch, planning, grading, family communication, and previously scheduled required meetings (e.g., IEP/504 meetings). This time is not designated for professional development or routine school meetings, though principals may convene emergency meetings if necessary.

- **Non-Teaching Staff Responsibilities**

Educational support personnel and other non-instructional staff will work with their principal or supervisor to determine how the essential functions of their roles can be performed remotely to support

students and school operations. Employees not assigned duties on a Virtual Instruction Day will be provided opportunities to make up work in accordance with negotiated agreements.

- **Staff Without Home Internet Access**

Staff who do not have reliable internet access at home will report to the nearest WCPS facility with connectivity or their assigned school, as directed by their supervisor, to carry out their duties. If travel to a WCPS location is not possible, the staff member must contact their supervisor to determine alternative expectations for the day. Staff who are unable to provide synchronous instruction must use appropriate leave.

- **Emergency Travel Situations**

If a staff member is unable to reach their assigned work location due to road closures or other emergency conditions, they must notify their supervisor as soon as possible to discuss alternative locations for synchronous instruction. Staff who are unable to provide synchronous instruction must use appropriate leave.

- **Instructional Plans Accessibility**

Teachers' lesson plans and materials must be accessible in a virtual format and available to administrators upon request to ensure instructional continuity in the event of an emergency.

- **Staff Leave & Substitute Procedures on Virtual Instruction Days**

Staff who require leave on a Virtual Instruction Day must enter the absence in Frontline Absence Management and notify their building administrator. Instructional plans and student assignments must be posted in Google Classroom.

Substitute plans for virtual instruction must include:

- The instructional schedule for the day.
- Google Meet links or codes.
- Lesson plans and student assignments.
- Attendance procedures and class rosters.
- Required accommodations and supports for students with IEPs, 504 Plans, or other documented needs.

Resident and long-term substitutes are responsible for documenting attendance and communicating it to the appropriate school personnel. Half-day and full-day leave options will follow standard district procedures, with administrators coordinating coverage to ensure required synchronous instruction is delivered.

# MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL – A/B DAY VIRTUAL SCHEDULES

This model supports schools operating on an A/B day schedule, where Periods 1,3,5, and 7 (odd-numbered periods) meet on A Day and Periods 2,4,6, and 8 (even-numbered periods) meet on B Day, while ensuring that students receive no more than four (4) total hours of synchronous instruction on a virtual inclement weather day, in alignment with MSDE guidance.

Exceptions:

- Boyd J. Michael, III Technical High School has only 7 periods and will omit period 8.
- The InnovatED Learning Center (ILC) electEd and supportED programs have only 7 periods and will omit period 8 (connectED has 8 periods).
- Barbara Ingram School for the Arts (BISFA) has 10 periods and will omit periods 9 and 10.

## A DAY (ODD-NUMBERED PERIODS)

TIME	PERIOD	FORMAT
9:00–10:00	PERIOD 1	Synchronous Instruction
10:05–11:05	PERIOD 3	Synchronous Instruction
11:10–12:10	PERIOD 5	Synchronous Instruction
12:15–1:15	PERIOD 7	Synchronous Instruction

## B DAY (EVEN-NUMBERED PERIODS)

TIME	PERIOD	FORMAT
9:00–10:00	PERIOD 2	Synchronous Instruction
10:05–11:05	PERIOD 4	Synchronous Instruction
11:10–12:10	PERIOD 6	Synchronous Instruction
12:15–1:15	PERIOD 8	Synchronous Instruction

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – VIRTUAL DAY SCHEDULES

This model provides four (4) full hours of synchronous instruction for elementary students, runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., and does not include encore/special area blocks. All instructional blocks are synchronous and MSDE-compliant.

## PRE-K – 2ND GRADE (9:00–1:15)

TIME	BLOCK	DESCRIPTION	SYNCHRONOUS
9:00–10:00	CORE BLOCK 1	ELA <i>live whole-group instruction</i>	Yes
<i>10:00–10:05 Break / Transition</i>			
10:05–11:05	CORE BLOCK 2	MATH <i>live instruction</i>	Yes
<i>11:05–11:10 Break / Transition</i>			
11:10–12:10	SMALL GROUPS / INTERVENTION	<i>Live small-group instruction &amp; conferencing</i>	Yes
<i>12:10–12:15 Break / Transition</i>			
12:15–1:15	OFFICE HOURS / STUDENT SUPPORT	<i>Required live office hours, check-ins, and conferencing</i>	Yes

*\*Each school will develop and communicate a specific schedule for Encore staff to ensure consistency, student access, and instructional continuity across all grade levels.*

### 3RD – 5TH GRADE (9:00–1:15)

TIME	BLOCK	DESCRIPTION	SYNCHRONOUS
9:00–10:00	CORE BLOCK 1	ELA <i>live instruction</i>	Yes
<i>10:00–10:05 Break / Transition</i>			
10:05–11:05	CORE BLOCK 2	MATH <i>live instruction</i>	Yes
<i>11:05–11:10 Break / Transition</i>			
11:10–12:10	CORE BLOCK 3	SCIENCE / SOCIAL STUDIES <i>live instruction</i>	Yes
<i>12:10–12:15 Break / Transition</i>			
12:15–1:15	OFFICE HOURS / STUDENT SUPPORT	<i>Required live office hours, check-ins, and conferencing</i>	Yes

*\*Each school will develop and communicate a specific schedule for Encore staff to ensure consistency, student access, and instructional continuity across all grade levels.*



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