



Malberg Administration Building
45 Ranoldo Terrace, P.O. Box 5015
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-0391
(856) 429-5600

April 17, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope this email finds you and your family healthy and safe during this unprecedented time.

We are pleased to inform you that the New Jersey Department of Education has approved the temporary provision of related services to students with disabilities via telepractice. As a result of this change, starting the week of April 20, the district will now offer direct services to students as per their IEPs and 504 plans in addition to consultation. Any recording of these related service sessions is a violation of Board of Education policy.

In order to comply with Board policy parents are expected to be present for the related service but to refrain from participating.

Counseling

Counselors will provide services using a virtual platform allowing students to receive direct counseling in addition to check-ins. In order to protect the confidentiality of each session, we are requesting that parents/guardians arrange for a private space, free of distractions, for their child to receive and participate in any virtual counseling sessions. Please take particular care to ensure that other individuals in the home do not hear or see these sessions and that the sessions are not recorded. Additionally, sharing information regarding the identity of other students in the group or the contents of the discussion is expressly prohibited. In certain circumstances a counselor may need to communicate with a student without the expected supervision. This contact, should it occur, will happen via telephone as opposed to a virtual learning platform.

Speech Therapy

Speech and Language Specialists (SLPs) will initiate telepractice through an online platform. To allow your child to derive the most benefit from speech and language therapy during this time, your child's SLP will continue to provide activities and materials to support skill reinforcement in the home. The SLP will contact you directly to schedule services. In order to create an environment that is conducive to learning, please make sure to limit distractions like a television or other background noise. To the extent that the IEP calls for push-in support or group sessions, parents/guardians should be aware that their child may participate with other students in online formats and may be visible to other participants in the sessions. Please remind your child to protect the confidentiality of information learned about others during these sessions.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists (OTs) will initiate telepractice through an online platform. To allow your child to derive the most benefit from occupational therapy during this time, your child's OT will continue to provide activities and materials to support skill reinforcement in the home. The OT will contact you directly to schedule services. In order to create an environment that is conducive to learning, please make sure to limit distractions like a television or other background noise. To the extent that the IEP or 504 Plan calls for group sessions, parents/guardians should be aware that their child may participate with other students in online formats and may be visible to other participants in the sessions. Please remind your child to protect the confidentiality of information learned about others during these sessions.



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Physical Therapy

Physical Therapists (PTs) will begin telepractice using an online platform. The delivery of physical therapy via telepractice is particularly challenging due to the inherent nature of therapeutic activities and the concerns about students' safety during physical therapy sessions. For this reason, therapists may not be able to address certain areas identified in your child's IEP or 504 plan. Your child's PT will contact you directly to schedule services and will continue to provide activities and materials to support skill reinforcement in the home. To the extent that the IEP or 504 Plan calls for group sessions, parents/guardians should be aware that their child may participate with other students in online formats and may be visible to other participants in the sessions. Please remind your child to protect the confidentiality of information learned about others during these sessions.

We understand that this is a challenging time for all and encourage you to maintain communication with your child's Case Manager during this period of virtual learning.

Acceptable Use Policy/Student Confidentiality

Instruction and related services provided through a virtual platform are an extension of the traditional classroom. Student use of technology and the internet must comply with the Board's established Acceptable Use Policy, which can be found on our District website. Students are prohibited from altering, capturing, and/or distributing any video images of classmates and staff members.

In order to protect the privacy of our students and preserve the integrity of our lessons, we also ask that parents refrain from participating in live instruction sessions unless the student cannot access the lesson without a parent's participation. We do understand that the individualized needs of some students may necessitate support or participation by a parent/guardian during a virtual session. Please contact your child's Case Manager if you have questions or concerns about your child's ability to participate in virtual group instruction independently.

For students participating in remote counseling and/or other related services sessions, we ask that parents/guardians take particular care in ensuring that they and other individuals in the home do not hear or see the sessions. Sharing information regarding the identity of other students in the group or the contents of the discussion is expressly prohibited.

If you have any questions about your child's program, then please contact your child's case manager. You may direct general questions to the Office of Pupil Services.

Sincerely,



LaCoyne H. Weathington
Director of Pupil Services