

# **Foxborough Public Schools Special Education Reopening Plan**



## **Office of Student Services**

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**Purpose:**

The Foxborough Public Schools is committed to providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to our students, consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services. Students will receive their IEP services in the fall, with some in-person and some remote opportunities. In support of some of our more vulnerable populations, students in substantially separate programs will have the choice to attend in-person full time. Students with disabilities, along with their peers in general education, will be assessed to evaluate skill gaps. In addition, special education progress reports and data on levels of performance towards goals prior to closure will be reviewed for progress and regression post-closure. The District will make every effort to maintain as much in-person instruction as is safely possible should a full closure once again be necessary.

**Special Education Services:**

On July 9, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released guidance on Special Education Services in relation to the reopening of school [MA DESE Special Education Guidance](#). This guidance advises districts to provide services identified in the student's IEP using in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both while emphasizing providing in-person instruction for preschool-aged students and students with significant and complex needs to the greatest extent possible.

**Students with 504 Plans**

Regardless of the learning model in place at any given time, all accommodations under Section 504 will be provided to students as outlined on their 504 plans. Teachers will follow students' 504 Plans for all in-person instruction as well as any accommodations that may be necessary for remote instruction in which the student participates.

- 504 Plans will be updated as needed and reviews scheduled.
- Any necessary evaluations and reevaluations will be completed.
- All 504 meetings will be conducted remotely.

**Delivery of Individual Education Program (IEP) Services**

Students will receive the services documented in their IEP's through in-person instruction, remote instruction, or a combination of both, with a strong emphasis on providing in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, while abiding by the current necessary health and safety requirements.

As remote learning is often more challenging for specific students, the district will prioritize in-person instruction for two particular groups of students with disabilities: preschool-aged students and students with significant and complex needs (described in detail below). The Foxborough Public Schools implemented a hybrid model of instruction for our students, therefore, students will be prioritized based on the criteria listed below for "full in-person," -- this subset of students will attend on a continuum of days based on individual need. Cohort C students may also be part of Cohort A and/or Cohort B, with additional time for in-person instruction. Additionally, students in specialized programs will have the opportunity to attend (5) days per week.

### Special Education: “Full” In-Person Model

Per the Department's guidance, the Foxborough Public Schools will provide in-person instruction to students meeting the criteria set forth by DESE for in-person instruction. To the greatest extent possible, preschool-aged students and students with significant and complex needs will attend and receive their related special education services on-site (Cohort C). Students in specialized programs are an example of students considered to have significant and complex learning needs. These students will attend on-site. Students with other complex learning needs, preschool-aged students, English Language Learners and students with various familial structures will also receive priority access to on-site learning.

- As stated above, Cohort C students may also be part of Cohort A and/or Cohort B, with additional time for in-person instruction.
- Cohort C students will receive in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible, based on individual student need.
- Cohort C receiving in-person services, can be grouped with students receiving remote services.

### Special Education: Hybrid Model

Foxborough Public Schools Hybrid Model will include both in-person, synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. In a learning environment that rotates between in-person (location in our school buildings) and remote learning, some services and instruction will be delivered synchronously through online platforms that allow for optimal instruction, communication, and observation between special educators, related service providers, support staff and students. Synchronous remote learning platforms allow teachers and students to communicate and interact in real-time. Asynchronous delivery will also be utilized, as students may need other approaches and supports to engage in during the remote component of the day. Additionally, special educators and related service providers may spend a portion of their day supporting some students in-person and another portion of their day providing students remote synchronous support. All learning and services provided remotely within a hybrid learning model will follow the guidance provided in the section below on Remote Learning. Similarly, instruction and services provided in-person will follow guidance provided in the section above on full in-person Learning, while meeting all current health and safety requirements.

Some examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- *Small group instruction – Academics*
- *Speech and Language therapy*
- *Occupational therapy*
- *Physical therapy*
- *Counseling*
- *Other related services*

Schools and services providers (Speech, OT, PT, counseling, etc.) will collaborate with parents/guardians on this as it may require a modified service delivery model. An example of this might be: *Student X is attending in the hybrid model and has Speech and Language Services 1x30min per week in their IEP. The child's school assigned Speech and Language Pathologist may propose 2x30 bi-weekly so they can receive all speech services in person.*

Students, in some cases that are receiving their special education services virtually, may also be grouped with other students receiving in-person special education services. When appropriate, peers without disabilities may be included to ensure inclusionary services are delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

## Special Education: Remote Learning Model

On July 9, 2020, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released their comprehensive guidance related to special education services during the 2020-2021 school year. As part of this guidance, DESE has stated the following:

- *If in-person instruction cannot be provided and students with disabilities must receive instruction remotely in full, or in part, through a hybrid model, they must receive special education instruction and related services necessary to provide FAPE through an Instruction and Services model of delivery (e.g., structured learning time, teletherapy, video-based lessons, etc.) instead of relying solely on a Resources and Supports model (e.g., packets and assignments), as it has been also stated in this guidance that the “Resources and Supports” delivery model can only be used on a temporary basis for a limited period of time (no more than two weeks). This delivery will be utilized if there is a case in which the district enters into a full remote learning model for the health and safety of our students, as teachers and service providers will need no longer than two weeks to adjust to the shift (i.e. scheduling, groupings, etc.).*

Within a remote learning model, your child is entitled to receive both services and accommodations set forth on his or her IEP consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities, teachers and staff. The district will make every effort to use creative approaches and strategies to provide special education instruction to students. Parents will be contacted to solicit their participation in formulating a learning plan for their child that includes a robust remote learning model for special education, along with a detailed schedule of when services will take place. Please note that as we are providing services in the school setting, Foxborough Public Schools will not be providing in-person services, in the home and/or community settings at this time.

During the Spring of 2020, the district utilized two models of remote service delivery to satisfy the requirement to provide a FAPE to students with disabilities: Resources and Supports model (e.g., sending packets and assignments home coupled with communication with parents) and an Instruction and Services model (e.g., structured learning time, teletherapy and video conferencing). For the 2020-2021 school year, the district is planning to remotely implement IEPs through the Instruction and Services model; if necessary, as stated earlier, the “Resources and Supports” model will only be used on a temporary basis for a limited period of no more than two weeks.

**Our Instruction and Services model will include the following components:**

- A regular and consistent schedule of supports, services and therapies as required by the student’s IEP, offered synchronously or asynchronously; the schedule will include time interacting directly with teachers and related service providers
  - independent work time, as appropriate, and opportunities for interacting with classmates
- Structured learning time designed so that the student can access state standards
- Frequent interactions with teachers and other staff members to ensure participation and engagement
- For students receiving most of their daily instruction through special education, supplemental work (beyond lessons taught synchronously or asynchronously) during the school day that can be accomplished independently with guidance from and accountability to the teacher or service provider
- Additionally, if the district enters the remote learning platform to instruct students all efforts will be made for students with IEPs, to have the choice to receive some of their ‘C’ grid services in-person if all health and safety guidelines have been met.

Foxborough Public Schools may provide a learning management system (LMS) for the academic instruction, based on individual student needs, while providing virtual services and therapies, which will be offered both synchronously and asynchronously. This will provide learning time and opportunities so the students can access state standards.

### Resources and Supports Model of Services

As the Foxborough Public Schools shift between any of the three models (remote, hybrid or full), we reserve the right to implement the “Resources and Supports” model on a temporary basis, for up to (2) weeks. This delivery will be utilized if there is a case in which the district enters into a full remote learning model for the health and safety of our students, as teachers and service providers will need no longer than two weeks to adjust to the shift (i.e. scheduling, groupings, etc.). Examples of this model include the following:

- Provision of **strategies, assignments, projects and packets** for students
- General Education materials with accommodations
- Materials directly from special educators and related service providers
- Online resources
- Education Apps to meet the needs of individual students

### Preschool Program

Preschool-age students with disabilities are particularly in need of in-person services so that they can develop the socialization, motor, and communication skills that are vitally important at this age. Foxborough Public Schools will prioritize in-person instruction for this age group but will also be prepared to adjust to remote services if necessary. The integrated preschool will return to in-person instruction based on DESE and EEC guidance regarding IEP compliance and health and safety measures. The Foxborough Public Schools will continue to run their sessions, as prior:

#### Sessions

- Tuesday/Thursday - AM/PM
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday - AM/PM
- Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday - PM
- Students in the intensive preschool program will attend as prior, based on individual needs, age, and Team identified amount of time.

### Transition from Early Intervention

An extension of Early Intervention (EI) services is available for children who turned 3 between March 15, 2020 and August 31, 2020. For those students, EI services can continue until special education eligibility determination can be completed and the child has transitioned to special education, or until October 15, 2020. As a result of the pandemic, Foxborough had been unable to conduct evaluations, convene IEP meetings, and initiate services by the child’s third birthday. However, as a district, we have been able to identify students that require special education services during the Summer 2020. Foxborough Public Schools will complete the transition process, have completed assessments, and an IEP signed for this group of students by October 15, 2020. In partnership with Early Intervention (EI) providers, we will develop a plan that explicitly outlines the transition process for each child with “extended EI services” and who are potentially eligible for school-based services.

\*All Preschool related meetings (eligibility, TPC, etc.) will be held remotely.

### Special Education Criteria: Full In-Person

#### Highest Level of Need

- 75% or more of program time receiving special education services
  - Specialized Programs
- Primarily Grid C with minimal inclusion services
  - Multiple related service providers (SLP, OT, Counseling PT, etc.)
  - Multiple areas of concern in and outside of the classroom (social/emotional, behavior, learning needs)
  - Substantially Separate/Partial Inclusion Placement
- Use of AAC system for Communication
- Cannot engage in remote learning due to their disability-related needs
- Complex medical issues/Complex familial structures
- Qualify for Extended School Year services due to documented, significant regression or recoupment of skill

#### High Level of Need

- Between 25% -75% of program time receiving special education services
  - Full day program (Inclusion with additional time for in-person special education services)
  - Two or more related service provider (SLP, OT, Counseling PT, etc.)
  - More than two areas of concern within the classroom (social/emotional, behavior, learning needs)
- Partial Inclusion Placement
- More than 300 minutes of “C” Grid Services over the course of the service delivery cycle
- Intermittent engagement in remote learning due to their disability related needs
- Intermittent access to remote learning due to familial systems challenges
- Multiple children in the same family receiving special education services
- Qualify for Extended School Year services due to documented, significant regression or recoupment of skill

### Special Education Criteria: Hybrid In-Person

#### Moderate/Low Level of Need

- Between 0% - 25% of program time receiving special education services
  - More than one area of concern within the classroom (social/emotional, behavior, learning)
  - One - two areas of service from related service provider (SLP, OT, Counseling, PT, etc.)
  - Full Inclusion Placement
- Less than (2) Hours per week of “C” Grid Services
- Accessing remote services but not consistently demonstrating skills

### **Inclusion and the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

As we plan for the implementation of physical distancing requirements for students and adults in classrooms, each of our schools will consider the additional special educators and related service providers who will need to enter our classrooms throughout the school day to provide services to students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. For in person learning, schools and staff will develop classroom assignments and service delivery schedules for students with disabilities so that they receive services consistent with their IEPs in the least restrictive environment, while also maintaining current health and safety protocols. In addition, special education teachers and related service providers (speech language therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) may provide special education services in the general education setting remotely from within the school building via video conference, instead of entering the classroom to provide services. This practice may help to minimize foot traffic in and out of classrooms while also providing access to services that support the inclusion of students with disabilities.

### **Student Learning Plans**

Special Education Teachers/liaisons will be contacting parents of students on their caseloads prior to the start of the school year (**no later than September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020**) to discuss how a given student's IEP services will be delivered, if different than described in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Using input from that discussion, teachers or liaisons will provide parents with written notification through a "Notice of Proposed Action" and an "Individual Student Learning Plan" containing specific information about how IEP services will be provided. As the Foxborough Public Schools shift between models (remote, hybrid and in-person), those student learning plans will be updated, with input from families, as necessary to align to the district model to describe how services will be provided, given the current health and safety guidelines at that time.

### **Parent Engagement**

The district will implement a robust two-way communication system with families. The level and frequency of communication will vary due to the child's individual needs. Each child's hub of communication will be their special education liaison. All written and oral communication will be provided in the primary language of the home in a language that can be easily understood by the family. Ongoing parent communication is vital as determining if and how services of students with disabilities will be provided differently as result of the changes in the overall learning environment, which is any of three models of instruction that the district may employ during the 2020-2021 school year. It is critical that IEP Team members consider information from parents/guardians regarding their children's experiences during the state of emergency, including primary areas of need, ability to access remote learning during these past months, and other information critical to meet students' needs as we reopen. Through a parent/guardian "reopening questionnaire," special education liaisons will complete for each family in the attempt to receive and use all available data and information from parents and guardians relative to reopening planning and scheduling. This will be used to support the student's present levels of performance upon their re-entry.

## **Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities**

A. Staff will also be prepared to provide hands-on assistance, with PPE, for activities of daily living for those students whose IEPs or Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) indicate support is needed in ADLs (e.g. feeding, toileting, changing of clothes and transitions) as well as:

- Using de-escalation techniques, escorting a student or the use of emergency protective hold (i.e. Use of de-escalation and physical intervention techniques - CPI)
- Utilizing hand over hand/hand under hand or physical guidance for academic purposes (discrete trial training, etc.)
- Providing support to students who need to be within 3 feet of an adult for any other reason (students with mobility issues, distractibility during transitions, etc.)

B. Student profiles included in this include students who have a history of exhibiting the following behaviors:

- Drooling
- Aggression (e.g. scratching, pinching, hitting, biting, kicking, head butting, spitting, etc.)
- Bolting
- Mouthing
- Self-injurious behavior

C. Smearing of bodily fluids:

- Facial mask and/or face shield
- Protective jacket and/or smock
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Staff will be encouraged to tie up, cover or pull back long hair; refrain from dangling jewelry; consider rubber-soled flat shoes.

## **Related Services:**

In many cases, the individual circumstances of staff and student health and safety may dictate the availability of in-person services, including speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation/mobility, visual, hearing, and counseling support. However, there will certainly be times when teletherapy services are safest and most appropriate.

- Materials may need to be assigned to individual therapists in buildings and equipment, such as headphones and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for closer distance instruction provided.
- Once the 2020-2021 school year commences, related service therapists will be scheduling students for in-person services, synchronous teletherapy services, or asynchronous services as prescribed by the student's active IEP and depending on the individual needs of students. These services will be delivered individually or in small groups. Schedules will need to accommodate the time needed to sanitize these rooms and/or equipment after each student or small group. Parents of children participating in the Hybrid Learning Model can expect that their children will receive a combination of in-person and teletherapies, as required.

## Staffing, Specialized Safety Supplies/Protective Equipment and Training

Some students with disabilities will require unique supports that may make it less possible to practice physical distancing. In addition, some students with disabilities will not be able to wear cloth face masks as frequently or at all. In order to support such students safely, schools and districts must ensure that:

- Educators, related service providers, paraprofessionals and other staff members are prepared with any additional protective equipment that may be needed as unexpected situations arise, such as disposable gowns, face shields, etc.
- When assessing the amount of protective equipment needed, considerations will be made for itinerant staff who interact with multiple groups of students in multiple locations, staff who perform tasks routinely that require close proximity and/or physical contact with students, and those who go out into the community to support students' educational programming;
- All staff members using additional protective equipment are properly trained to accommodate children's needs
- Families will be consulted as partners to ensure the health and safety of students.

As a result, the Department recommended that school and district special education service providers follow the guidelines that the Center for Disease Control describes for "direct service providers" including personal care attendants, direct support professionals, paraprofessionals, therapists, related services personnel, assistants, school nurses, health office staff, and any other staff who must come into close contact with students with disabilities.

Please note that DESE provided guidance on the provisioning of key safety supplies on June 5, 2020 in order to help schools and districts determine the quantities of the protective equipment described below:

<i>Classification of Individual Wearing protective equipment</i>	<i>Face Shield</i>	<i>Disposable Gowns</i>	<i>Disposable Gloves</i>	<i>Gowns/ Coveralls/ Other Body Covering</i>	<i>Cloth Face Covering</i>	<i>Disposable mask</i>
DSPs in care areas of students with suspected COVID-19	X	X	X	X		X (with face shield if N95/KN95 not available)
DSPs in the same facility but not in the care areas for students with suspected COVID-19					X	
DSPs providing personal care to students without suspected COVID-19 but who may potentially be exposed to bodily fluids	X (preferred)		X			X
DSPs performing or present during aerosol generating procedures such as nebulizer treatments, chest PT, suctioning, trach care	X		X	X		
Transportation personnel/monitors who must come in direct physical contact with passengers (e.g. buckling/unbuckling, performing wheelchair safety services)			X		X	

### Initial Evaluations, Reevaluations and IEP Team Meetings

Due to the closure of school and the unexpected suspension of in-person education in March, some annual review team meetings, initial and re-evaluations and/or parts of evaluations were postponed. Evaluations have resumed this summer and will continue throughout the school year. Students will be evaluated when they are in-person at schools and results will be reviewed virtually. For students attending remotely, or in the hybrid model, assessors (School Psychologists, Speech and Language therapists, Occupational therapists etc.) will contact parents to set up times for individual in person testing. As we plan to return to in-person instruction and services, the district will address this situation as follows:

Meeting Priorities	Testing Priorities
Postponed Initial Eligibility Team Meetings	Postponed Initial Special Education Testing
Postponed Re-Evaluation Eligibility Team Meetings	Postponed Re-Evaluation Testing
Postponed Annual Review Team Meetings	Special Education Testing due 20-21 and, as needed
IEP Teams will continue to conduct initial, re-evaluation and annual review meetings as they are due	

As per guidance from the DESE, IEPs will be updated as though the student is attending school full time, in-person; The district is prepared to adapt our approach to the delivery of IEP services, at any time, based on current health guidelines. Unless prohibited by current health guidelines, in-person special education evaluations will be conducted regardless of the learning model adopted at a given time (in-person, hybrid, or remote). **All IEP Team meetings will continue to be conducted remotely.**

### Special Education Evaluations: Care and Safety Guidelines

1:1 Testing situations will be permitted but will be expected to follow all safety guidelines contained in this document.

- During the testing session, the students and the evaluator will be seated at a table directly across from each other. For added safety and protection, a plexiglass shield will be placed in the middle of the table.
- Prior to the testing session, care will be taken to ensure that any testing materials to be handled by the student (i.e. manipulatives, writing utensils, etc.) are properly cleaned and sanitized.
- During the testing session, the student will be permitted to take breaks as needed; however, your child will be required to remain in the testing area during this time. Mask breaks will also be permitted at this time if 6 feet of distance is maintained between the student and the evaluator.
- Depending on the anticipated length of the testing session, the student may wish to bring a snack and bottle of water. For testing sessions that extend through the lunch hour, the student is encouraged to bring a bag lunch, which he/ she will be permitted to eat outside (with supervision and weather permitting)

### Face Coverings and Masks

Students and staff must wear masks or face coverings, with exceptions only for those students or staff for whom it is not safe to do so due to medical conditions. In cases in which masks or face coverings are not possible, strict social distancing of 6 feet is required. If the assessment requires the removal of the face mask, the student and evaluator will be at least 6 feet across and have plexiglass in between the student and evaluator.

### Frequent Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing

- All students and evaluators must wash hands upon arrival. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content should be used. The district will provide appropriate hand washing/sanitizing wipes
- Regular cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and disposal protocols:
- Evaluators will be trained in appropriate cleaning protocols and routines to ensure that facilities and surfaces are regularly cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected in accordance with health and safety guidelines and that hazardous materials are disposed of properly. This will include the cleaning and sanitizing of all non-disposable assessment manipulatives.