

2020-2021 School Year Handbook Addendum: Abington High School Hybrid, Remote, and COVID-19-related practices

Dear Abington High School students and families

As we contemplate the school year ahead, we are met with an interrupting number of changes and differences to the high school experiences we have had, or the one we expect. Despite these challenges, the teaching staff and the Abington High School learning community is working diligently to provide the best possible education experience for students given new and dynamic constraints. This letter serves to inform, students, families, and the community about the substantial changes to school rules and routines following protocols and guidelines provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). These changes will be memorialized in an addendum to the Abington High School Student Handbook for the 2020-2021 year, and shared with you below for your information and review.

-Jonathan Bourn, Principal jonathanbourn@abingtonps.org

General Information:

- In the Hybrid learning model, students district-wide have been divided into cohorts that will attend school on different days. Generally, students with last names beginning with **A-L** have been assigned to the **Green cohort** (attending school Monday & Tuesday, remote days Wednesday through Friday) and students with last names beginning with **M-Z** assigned to the **Wave cohort** (attending school Thursday & Friday, remote days Monday through Wednesday).
- Families may request a cohort change OR a shift to our Virtual Academy (**no in-school learning**) by emailing our school secretary, Mrs. Kelleher: jannykelleher@abingtonps.org . Note: Families who have opted out of in-school learning in favor of our Virtual Academy may return to the in-school model in November or at the end of any trimester (details to follow)
- Should Abington Public Schools enter a Remote Learning model (due to public health factors), students are expected to adhere to a full school-day schedule (beginning at 7:25 AM). A sample schedule is enclosed within this document. Attendance policies and academic expectations (work completion, quality work submissions, participation) are expected to be upheld and staff are available to assist students and families who are experiencing difficulty meeting these expectations.
- The first day of school is **Wednesday, September 16** and we will feature a modified cohort schedule **for the first three days of school ONLY:**
Wednesday, 9/16: in-school for Green Cohort - all 7 periods will meet for shorter lengths
Thursday, 9/17: in-school for Wave Cohort - all 7 periods will meet for shorter lengths
Friday, 9/18, remote for all students

Health & Safety:

- Returning to our campus means we must be vigilant about ensuring the health & safety of the children coming to learn and the staff coming to work at Abington High School. *It is vital that families help us with this effort by monitoring symptoms for COVID-19.* Staff and students shall remain home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms: **Fever over 100 degrees, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss**

of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. DESE has provided guidance for districts to help shape the response to students and staff who are either symptomatic or have tested positive for COVID-19. [See the guidance here.](#)

- Please be aware that all Massachusetts residents, including students, are required to follow Governor Baker's COVID-19 Travel Order and quarantine 14 days when returning from certain States. More information and updates can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>.
- Students assessed by the school nurse, Donna Conso and Sarah LaPointe (donnaconso@abingtonps.org, sarahlapointe@abingtonps.org), who are displaying COVID-like symptoms will wait in a dedicated room near the main entrance to be picked-up
- The following links outline protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios (exposure, positive test, etc)

[DESE COVID Response Protocols](#)

[DESE & DPH Joint memo RE: close contacts, etc.](#)

- All individuals, staff or student, must wear a mask (covering their face and mouth) while in the building.
- Reminder: the influenza vaccine will be required for all students, [per state order](#).
- Our classrooms, high-touch surfaces such as door handles & handrails, and frequently used areas throughout our building will be cleaned daily (in addition to being sanitized on Wednesdays).
- Students will be asked to sanitize hands as they enter the building. Additional hand sanitizing stations have been added throughout our building and both hand-washing and hand sanitizing will occur frequently.
- Bathrooms will be monitored by staff and disinfected frequently.
- Students should come prepared with drinking water for the school day. Classroom and hallway water fountains have been turned off.

Hand Sanitizer Opt Out

Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses, and when your students return to school, they will be asked to wash their hands throughout the school day to help keep themselves and others healthy. Hand washing is the preferred method for removing germs however, soap and water are not always readily available. When handwashing is not possible, students will be asked to use hand sanitizer at school; 60% or greater alcohol-based hand sanitizers work by killing certain germs that “sit” on the skin.

Hand sanitizers are considered to be over the counter (OTC) medications. This is to notify you that you have the ability to opt your child out of using hand sanitizer at school. If you DO NOT want your child to use hand sanitizer during the school day, please send a signed and dated paper copy of the sentence below to your child's school nurse:

I do not want my child, (insert child's first and last name), to use hand sanitizer during the school day.
If you consent to have your student use hand sanitizer at school, no further action is necessary.

Masks:

All students must wear a mask at all times. Students should bring a mask from home that adequately covers the nose and mouth. Disposable masks will be available at the school for all

students who report to school without a mask. Students will be allowed at least one 5 minute mask break per period.

Abington Public Schools Mask Policy

File: EBCFA

FACE COVERINGS

The Abington Public Schools are committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. PreK students are not required to wear a mask, but strongly encouraged to wear one.

Face coverings must:

- cover the nose and mouth
- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be able to remain securely in place
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape with the exception of disposable masks

Mask will be removed at different points throughout the day like during mask breaks at 6 or more feet in distance between students and staff, lunch and to drink water.

There may be exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral, or other challenges who are unable to wear masks. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption and must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health. Face shields or physical barriers are strongly suggested as an alternative in such instances.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face covering for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation without one.

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be removed from the school building for in-person learning until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention – Considerations for Wearing Masks -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Reopening Guidelines -

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts – Mask Up MA! – <https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

SOURCE: MASC – August 2020

Abington High School Mask Wearing Protocols for Code of Conduct

Teacher/Staff Expectations

- Opening statement of expectations every day at beginning of class “welcome class, please make sure your masks are on for the duration of the period”
- One clear redirection (verbal/non-verbal) from teacher for student to properly wear their mask.
- Anything other than immediate student compliance, student sent to the Main Office

Administrative Process

- Conversation with student
- Student demonstrates understanding and promises compliance – this student will be sent back to class (AP can call classroom or walk student back if possible)
- If student does not demonstrate understanding with no promise of compliance a phone call will be made to parents/guardians
- If parents can change student’s behavior, they will be returned to class.
- If the student continues to not comply, they will be sent home.

Lockers:

Due to the potential for crowding in the hallways, students will not have access to lockers. Athletic lockers are also not available. Abington High School will work to minimize the amount of materials students will need to carry.

Schedules:

- School start time (7:25) remains the same, with a slightly earlier dismissal at 1:50pm, regardless of in-person/hybrid or remote models. However, arrival and dismissal processes for on-site days will begin earlier than these start/end times to accommodate the safe movement of students.
- Students may not enter the building earlier than 7:10am, and must report to their first block class for that day.
- After dismissal at 1:50pm, students are expected to exit the building by 1:57pm.
- Sample [hybrid and remote schedules can be found following this link](#). Specific student schedules can be viewed via the Aspen portal.

Learning Expectations:

- Students will be graded on the work they have submitted both within Canvas (remote/asynchronous work) or online as well as the work they have produced during in-person sessions.
- Students will be required to check in daily by 7:30am, *whether at home or in-person*, for school attendance purposes.
- Students will be responsible for completing assignments/tasks assigned via Canvas or other online options. Feedback on asynchronous tasks will be delivered in a timely manner by the educator.
- Students are expected to be available for attendance, check-ins, synchronous meetings and support during off-site or remote days (within the hybrid or remote model).
- COVID-19 related absences (either from illness or quarantine) will not count towards our regular attendance policy.
- Students in the virtual cohort who wish to participate in athletics will be required to submit a request for participation. Students can do so by submitting in writing to the athletic director, coach, and their guidance counselor a request that will include why they wish to participate in athletics after choosing the virtual academic option. The request will be reviewed by the athletic

director, coach of the individual sport and the student's guidance counselor. The student and/or parent may be required to meet virtually with the guidance counselor, athletic director, and coach. After reviewing the request and a potential meeting, the athletic director, coach, and guidance counselor will make a recommendation to the principal for decision.

Remote Learning Code of Conduct:

- a. Students will not use cell phones during synchronous sessions.
- b. All student cameras must be enabled.
- c. Students will not utilize distracting backgrounds. Blank backgrounds or the environment in which the student is engaged in Remote Learning are acceptable.
- d. First and last names will be used by students when labeling their "window."
- e. Comments and responses will be provided verbally, unless otherwise provided for by the teacher.
- f. Multi-tasking will be prohibited; students should be attentive to synchronous sessions at all times, just as when school is in normal operation.
- g. Students should be attentive and engaged as they would be during class held during normal operation.
- h. Student attendance will be required at all sessions, and attendance will be taken with advance notice being provided for tardiness and absences to the extent possible.
- i. Synchronous Learning Sessions are not intended to replace parental/family/guardian supervision.
- j. All work product will be graded as during normal school operations, except as altered by the establishment of an SEL Plan, IEP, 504, or similar arrangement.
- k. Recording of live Synchronous Learning Sessions will be strictly prohibited.
- l. All Acceptable Use Policy and Student Handbook rules continue to be in effect during Remote Learning.

Lunch, Recess, and Mask Breaks:

- Lunch (as well as snack) will take place in the cafeterias. Lunch blocks are scheduled for 25 minutes, with first lunch at **10:30**, second lunch at **11:11**, and third lunch at **11:55** during period 3 on Mondays and Thursdays, and period 6 on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- Students will be assigned seats in the cafeterias as required by guidance for contact tracing. Once seated, students do not need to wear masks.
- Students will have mask breaks throughout the day, in each class and during lunch. During this time students will be asked to adhere to 6 ft or more of social distance.
- Staff will be encouraged to take students outside to move and enjoy our campus, as long as a 6ft distance is adhered to.
- Families enrolled in the Free/Reduced Lunch program will be provided meal options (breakfast & lunch) for their student's off-campus days. Our Food Services staff will facilitate these meal pickups on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- Food will not be permitted in classrooms. Students are strongly encouraged to eat all food, especially breakfast, before entering into the building. ***We are urging parents for your cooperation in this matter.***

Arrival, Pick-ups, and Drop Offs:

- For arrival, please drop off students between the turf fields and the gymnasium entrance. Students will need to enter the building by the main entrance while maintaining 6 feet of social

distance. Students will exit the passenger side and enter the building through the main entrance while maintaining 6ft of social distance.

- Students arriving after our start time must wait outside the main entrance and ring the bell for assistance to sign in tardy. School staff will admit the student and direct them to class.
- **No drop-in early dismissals**, advance notice is required for all dismissals. This can be achieved via phone call (least amount of advanced notice) or email (if parent knows prior to the day of dismissal) to Main Office. Students will be collected by school staff & brought to the front door for dismissal. ID will be checked by staff and students will be released to approved adults. Parents/caregivers will not be able to enter the building beyond the vestibule.
- Restricted item drop offs – since parent and visitor access to the building will be limited, caregivers may only drop off items needed for instruction, for example, a student’s school issued computer, or glasses. Students may not have food or other personal items dropped off for them. A school lunch will be provided to any student that forgets their lunch at home. ***We are urging parents for your cooperation in this matter.***
- As students are dismissed, they will exit to the front walkway through either the main door or front stairwell door. Parents should collect their students and proceed to their vehicles so we can clear the campus quickly and avoid overcrowding and traffic issues. Parents are asked to maintain distance and not cluster together with others while waiting for their students to exit.
- There will be no after school activities or events in the building, so students will be required to exit the building by 1:57pm.

Technology Resources:

- Students and families will be accessing much of their online classroom content through [Canvas](#). Within Canvas, students will have courses established for each of their core subject areas and daily assignment submissions, assessments, links, and course content will be hosted in these courses.
- Accessing the [Parent Portal](#), [Parent Portal “My Info” Video Tutorial](#)
- Families in need of a laptop for their student’s remote learning can request one by filling out the form found here: [APS Remote Learning Device Request](#)
- Frequently used links to online/remote content can be found below, families are encouraged to bookmark these websites.

[Link to CANVAS Portal](#)

[Link to CLEVER](#)

[Link to ASPEN Parent](#)