

ABINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL
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AMS 2020-21 School Year Handbook Addendum & COVID-19-Related Practices

Dear Abington Middle School Families,

Abington Middle School Administration is providing this addendum to the Abington Middle School Handbook. Significant planning and preparation have gone into developing a safe and executable plan for reopening school by following protocols and guidelines provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). With this document, we intend to outline the changes to the student experience at AMS. While planned practices are subject to changes in response to public health conditions, the information and practices outlined below are planned to address the safety and social emotional well-being of students at Abington Middle School and are expected to remain unchanged during all in-person student learning.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. MacCurtain, Principal
Sarah Sawyers, Assistant Principal

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>.

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 and Friday, remote days Monday through Wednesday).

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- 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

Thursday, 9/17: in-school for Wave Cohort

Friday, 9/18, remote for all students

- Should Abington Public Schools enter a fully Remote Learning model (due to public health factors), students are expected to adhere to a full school-day schedule beginning at 8:00 A.M.
- Attendance policies and academic expectations (work completion, quality work submissions, participation) are expected to be upheld and staff will be available to assist students and families who experience difficulty meeting these expectations.

Health & Safety

- Returning to our campus means we must be vigilant about ensuring the health & safety of the Abington Middle School community. *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.](#)
- Students assessed by the school nurse, Mrs. Smith (joansmith@abingtonps.org), who are displaying COVID-like symptoms will wait in a dedicated medical waiting 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. [Click here for the APS Mask Policy.](#)
- Our classrooms, high-touch surfaces such as door handles & handrails, and frequently used areas throughout our building will be sanitized daily.
- 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. [Click here for the APS Hand Sanitizer Letter.](#)
- Bathrooms will be monitored by staff and disinfected frequently.
- We recommend that students come prepared with drinking water in a refillable water bottle for the school day. Classroom and hallway water fountains have been turned off. Water filling stations are operational, and students will be able to refill water bottles.

Student Homeroom Cohorts

- To the extent possible and in accordance with DESE guidance, Abington Middle School students will attend school in homeroom cohorts and will not travel between classrooms. Each homeroom cohort will have an assigned classroom space. Exceptions to this include Accelerated Mathematics, certain Spanish sections, Special Education and related service-learning spaces.
- Students will have assigned seats in homeroom cohorts as well as any other learning spaces they may access.

Lockers

- Students will not be assigned lockers. Student desks include a backpack hook for holding student backpacks.

Schedules (daily hours, example schedule)

- School start (7:50) and end times (2:22) remain unchanged for the upcoming school year.
- Sample hybrid and remote schedules can be found following the links below. Specific classroom schedules can be provided by your student's teacher.

[Sample Remote Schedule](#)

[Sample Hybrid Schedule](#)

Learning Expectations

- Whether participating in in-person, remote, or virtual learning, students are expected to adhere to the AMS code of conduct outlined in the existing student handbook. However, there are specific norms and expectations for online learning that the existing handbook does not directly address. [Click here for the APS Remote Learning Code of Conduct](#).
- Students will be graded on the work they have submitted both within Canvas (remote/asynchronous work) or online assessments (through subject and grade specific curriculum software) as well as the work they have produced during in-person sessions.
- Students will be responsible for completing assignments/tasks assigned via Canvas or other online options (using Pearson or Wonders online components). 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. See the AMS COVID-19_related amended attendance policy below.

Attendance Policy

Students shall remain at home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Families are asked to report any illness symptoms that precluded them from attending school, to assist in symptom surveillance.

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19 and should remain home until they speak with their health care provider:

- Fever or chills over 100 degrees
- 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

Absences due to COVID- 19 symptoms, as described above, will be considered excused by parent note or physician documentation.

Students arriving to school late due to distancing or other safety measures will not be considered tardy and are exempt from the tardy procedures below.

Breakfast, Lunch and Mask Breaks

- Breakfast will not be sold on the AMS cafeteria. Students are encouraged to have a healthy breakfast before entering the school. No students should be eating outside of planned snack and lunch times.
- Lunch will be held in the cafeteria and seminar room; students will not need to eat lunch in classrooms. All students will have an assigned seat for lunch and must not change that seat without a staff member's permission to allow for contact tracing. Students must wear masks until they are seated and then may remove their masks. Masks must be put back on after eating and before moving back to classrooms.
- Mask breaks will be scheduled twice daily. Whenever possible, these will be held outdoors. Outdoor mask breaks will take place in the tennis courts and in front of the building. Indoor mask breaks will be held in the project-based learning labs, seminar room, and cafeteria.
- Grades 5 & 6 snacks may be eaten during the first snack break of the day.

Arrival & Dismissal

I. Student Arrival

Multiple options exist for student arrival and dismissal at Abington Middle School. Families are encouraged to choose the arrival and dismissal procedures that best fit their needs. It is anticipated that, due to safety and distancing, arrival and dismissal will take longer than it has in the past, particularly for those families choosing to use the Door 10 option. We appreciate your patience.

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- Abington Middle School will open to students at 7:35 A.M. Please note, this is a change from the previous year's door open time.
- Upon entering the building all students will report directly to homerooms. The cafeteria will not be available as a gathering or waiting place for students.

Parent Drop off Options:

- **Door 10** – Parents may choose to enter the complex and proceed around the building to door 10, which is directly across from the tennis courts. An AMS staff member will be there to assist with distancing.
- **Gliniewicz Way** – Walkways exist between Gliniewicz Way and the front entrances at both the first entrance to the complex and at the complex exit by the rotary.
- **Abington Public Library** – Some families have chosen to use the APL parking lot as a drop off/pick up location. Walkways exist to the school via Gliniewicz Way or through Reilly Field.

Bussing:

- Students arriving on the bus will enter through the front of the building. Busses will be signaled to empty by AMS staff members.

II. Student Dismissal

Unless directed by staff members with parental agreement, students must leave school at the end of the student day.

Parent Pick Up Options:

- **Door 10** – Parents may choose to pick up students at Door 10. Students exiting door 10 will be asked to distance while waiting for parents.
- **Gliniewicz Way** – Parents may utilize the parking spots on Gliniewicz Way to pick up students. Students will exit the front of the building and use the walkway to Gliniewicz Way.
- **Abington Public Library** – Some families have chosen to use the APL parking lot to pick up students. Students will exit the front of the building and use the walkway options to the APL lot.

Bussing:

- Bus students will be dismissed by bus number through an intercom announcement.

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

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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](#)

[Link to CLEVER](#)

[Link to ASPEN Parent Portal](#)

We look forward to having students back in our building soon!