



PENNCREST

EMPOWERING LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

March 30, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are in the midst of an unprecedented national crisis and worldwide COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in the closure of our schools as a means of protecting each of us and preventing the spread of the virus. We hope all of your family remains safe and healthy in these difficult times. PENNCREST School District is committed to making a good faith effort in providing education to all students while school operations are impacted by the pandemic.

In response to the closures, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has required schools to develop continuity of education plans for providing ongoing instruction to our students. When a school is closed because of COVID-19 response efforts and provides educational services to the general student population, it must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability can be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP or section 504 plan. As a student with a disability, your child must have access to the same educational opportunities as the general student population, including the provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE). In other words, our teachers will be responsible to uphold their obligation in following student IEPs, providing accommodations, and ensuring FAPE to our special education population to the greatest extent possible and to the best of their ability. In some circumstances, the alternatives and accommodations that are possible may not meet our FAPE requirement. These continuity education plans are for providing services to the extent possible when normal school operations are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, PENNCREST School District will provide services to students by multiple means including: online/internet and virtual assignments and support, providing hard copy packets, email, and phone calls. Special education teachers and related service providers (speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy programs) will be assisting students with maintenance and growth activities to help them continue to progress towards IEP goals to the best of our abilities. In addition, your child's case manager (whether 504 and IEP) will be responsible to work closely with you and the general education teachers to ensure the necessary support and instruction is being provided. All of these actions are necessitated by the requirements of social distancing and stay-at-home orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that in-person services cannot be provided at this time.

PENNCREST School District considered the following options for services during this pandemic:

1. Provide services in the home. This option was rejected for health and safety reasons.
2. Providing only enrichment services. This option was rejected because more intensive and relevant services can be offered for the benefit of the student.

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3. Providing no service. This option was rejected because more intensive and relevant services can be provided by alternative means including; paper packets, online resources and instruction, video conferencing, phone, and email methods.

PENNCREST School District's Continuity of Education Plan considered the type of programming that is offered in your child's IEP and the current limitations on school operations resulting from the pandemic, government orders, and health and safety concerns. This emergency plan to provide services to the best of our abilities and in good faith, will continue in place until further notice or until the District and schools are able to resume normal operations.

We are not proposing to revise your child's IEP at this time, but rather we will continue to work with your child's current IEP and notice of recommended educational placements (NOREP) in the delivery of instruction to the greatest extent possible. We remain hopeful that we will be able to return to school at some point this year. However, if your child has a plan review coming up, we do plan to continue IEP/504 Plan reviews on their normal schedule. Due to the social distancing requirements, those meetings will be held virtually. If you have a scheduled IEP meeting for your child, you will be contacted prior to the scheduled meeting and provided with a link and phone number giving you the ability to access and participate in the meeting. We trust you understand the need for these alternative arrangements. The circumstances are not ideal, but we ask that you bear with us.

The pandemic has presented us with an emergency situation, and this continuity of education plan will remain in place until we are able to resume normal school operations. At that time, we will review each student's situation and whether the disruption of the pandemic response requires programmatic changes. If there are questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Patti Fiely, Director of Student Services by email pfuely@penncrest.org or phone (814) 337-1600 ext. 1625.

Sincerely,

Patti Fiely
Director of Student Services
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pfuely@penncrest.org