



Important Information about the Use of Virtual Platforms

The Somerville Public Schools is committed to providing your child with services and supports and holding IEP meetings to the extent practicable during the current school closure. To that end, we are providing virtual sessions and virtual IEP meetings.

The services and supports proposed may be held individually or in a small-group virtual setting, which means it will be accessible to school staff, students, and parents/guardians who are provided a link to the virtual session. The IEP meetings will be accessible to school staff, students, and parents/guardians who are provided a link to the meetings. We will strive to limit the disclosure of confidential student information, but the nature of these virtual services, meetings, and supports means that they could be provided in the virtual presence of other individuals and we cannot guarantee student privacy.

In an effort to protect the safety and confidentiality of our students and families, we ask that participants, including school staff, students, and any other providers, adhere to the following expectations in virtual sessions (including those provided individually or in a group) and meetings:

- Parents of students are discouraged from observing, to the extent possible, virtual sessions to protect student confidentiality. Parents of students of course are expected and welcomed to participate in IEP Team meetings.
- Participants will not share the links to the virtual services or supports with others or otherwise invite or allow others to participate in the virtual services or supports, without the school district's express consent. Participants will not share the links to the virtual IEP Team meetings with others or otherwise invite or allow others to participate in the virtual IEP Team meetings, without notice to the school district.
- If a parent is observing a virtual session, they agree to ensure the confidentiality of what they observe, as if they were a participant, in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this document, and not to disclose information other than about their own child.
- Participants acknowledge other participants in the virtual sessions or IEP Team meetings will see whatever is visible by the participants' webcam or other device, including but not limit to themselves, and portions of their homes. Likewise, participants acknowledge that they will see whatever is broadcasted by other participants. Participants agree to participate in these virtual sessions or IEP Team meetings in a quiet, private area free of distraction, to the extent practicable, to provide an environment conducive to learning and to protect student privacy.
- Participants understand that certain information that may be protected under, among other laws, FERPA, the IDEA, HIPPA, and the Massachusetts Student Records regulations, might be disclosed in the course of providing virtual services or at IEP Team meetings.
- Participants agree not to record in any way (*e.g.*, video or audio recording, screenshots, or photographs) the virtual services, IEP meetings, or supports unless otherwise agreed to in advance in writing by all applicable parties. This prohibition applies to services/supports provided individually and in a group setting or to IEP Team meetings. The participants acknowledge that recording these services without consent may be prohibited by law.



Somerville Public Schools

Education – Inspiration - Excellence

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- Participants agree to behave in a manner conducive to learning, to the extent possible. Pertinent district policies and rules, including but not limited to those prohibiting cyberbullying and any acceptable use policies, apply during virtual sessions and IEP Team meetings. Students shall refrain from sharing inappropriate visuals or using inappropriate language during sessions. The school district reserves the right to remove from a virtual session any participant or parent observer who violates these rules or is not acting appropriately.

Your participation, or that of your child in any video, audio, or virtual sessions or IEP meetings arranged by the Somerville Public Schools means you agree to these terms and will not hold the Somerville Public schools liable for release of any student or personal information.

If you feel that you are unable to agree to these guidelines, please contact your child's case manager or the Assistant Director of Special Education Marilyn H. Vrontas at mvrontas@k12.somerville.ma.us.