

Port Jefferson Union Free School District
Special Education Department
COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. During the COVID 19 school closure will my child have access to the services and supports from their special education providers?

YES. As per NYS guidance, school districts must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student with a disability is provided the special education and related services identified in the student's individualized education program (IEP). Method and delivery of services in the Port Jefferson School District will consist of a teacher created instructional plan which may include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities to meet your child's needs.

2. Will my child have access to the same special education teachers and related service providers (speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling etc.)?

Throughout the closure, students will have services and support from the same Special Education teachers and Related Service personnel (Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Behavior Consultant, Psychologist ect.) that they would typically see as part of their program in the school buildings. Please note that our Occupation Therapy, Physical Therapy and Behaviors Services are contracted through outside vendors. Correspondence about scheduling services may come from their agency offices, however, these are the same providers that regularly work with our district and you child should be familiar with them.

3. If I have questions about my child's services, who should I contact?

Just as when school is in session in the buildings, your primary contact for your child's services is their case manager. Please reach out to the case manager with any questions or concerns. They provide you with needed assistance or direct you to the appropriate teacher or administrator for additional follow up.

4. Will Committee on Special Education meetings continue to be scheduled during the closure?

YES. The Special Education office will continue to schedule and conduct CSE meetings. Meetings will be scheduled virtually and conducted through the Google Meet virtual platform. Each meeting will consist of required participants and service providers.

5. My child was due for updated evaluations for their Reevaluation CSE Meeting but they were not completed prior to the closure. Will the meeting still be scheduled?

YES. The reevaluation meeting will proceed with all available updated information from your child's service providers. The CSE and the parent will determine a mutually agreed upon alternate date for recommended evaluations to be completed upon the reopening of school.

6. My child was in the process of an initial eligibility evaluation for Special Education services prior to closure. Will the initial eligibility meeting be scheduled as originally planned, within a 60 day timeline?

If an evaluation of a student with a disability requires a face-to-face meeting or observation, the evaluation would need to be delayed until school reopens. The CSE and the parents will work together to determine a mutually agreed upon alternate timeline for the completion of the required evaluations and the scheduling of the initial eligibility CSE meeting.

7. Due to the nature and severity of my child's disability, my child is typically recommended to participate in the special education summer school program. Will there still be a summer school program this year?

To date, NYS Education Department Office of Special Education has not provided school districts with specific guidance as to when we can plan for a reopening of the school buildings. As such, we do not yet have any specific information about how the Special Education Summer School Program will be implemented for students who qualify. Updated information will be provided to the parents of students who qualify once we receive specific guidance from the state.

8. During the implementation of the district distance learning plan, is my child entitled to recommended modifications and accommodations as listed on their Individualized Education Plan?

YES. Your child's special education teacher will work to implement all modifications and accommodations to the greatest extent possible during the closure. Additionally, parents will be provided information, from their special education providers, about how to support their child at home. Additional information can be found at:

- [Bringing Accommodations into the Living Room](#)
- [Supporting individuals with Autism through Uncertain Times](#)

9. I am concerned about my child's emotional reaction to the school closure and the pandemic. What school supports are available to support my child? Who can I contact for assistance and resources?

During the closure, the Port Jefferson counseling staff (psychologist, social worker, guidance counselors) are available to support your child and provide you with information on any needed resources. For non-emergent situations, please call the Special Education Office at (631) 791-4241 and leave a message specific to your concerns. A member of our counseling staff will be in contact with you.

For emergency, life threatening situations please call 911 or visit the local Emergency Room.

Our district counseling staff can be reached at:

Elementary School

- School Psychologist: Allyson Carlson acarlson@portjeffschools.org
 - Website [Dr. C's Corner](#)
- School Social Worker: Jessica Peterson jpeterso@portjeffschools.org

High School/Middle School

- School Psychologist: Laura Ametrano Lametra@portjeffschools.org
- School Social Worker: Kristin Britt kbritt@portjeffschools.org
- School Psychologist: Kristen Wendel kwendel@portjeffschools.org
 - Website [Middle and High School Support Team](#)

Some additional web-based resources can be found at:

- [COVID-19 Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
- [Child Mind Institute-Supporting Kids During the COVID 19 crisis](#)
- [Suffolk County Mental Health Resources](#)

These local agencies can be of support to you and your child during times of crisis.

- DASH - Crisis Care for Children, Adults and Families
90 Adams Avenue, Hauppauge, NY 11788
(631) 952-3333 Available 24/7 365 days
- Mather Hospital
75 North Country Road, Port Jefferson, NY (631) 473-1320
- Response Crisis Hotline: (631) 751-7500

The landscape of education during the COVID 19 closure is constantly changing. If you have a question regarding your child's Special Education services that were not addressed within this FAQ, please contact:

Dr. Jodi Cahill, Director of Special Education

jcahill@portjeffschools.org

(631) 791-4241

****Messages left at this number are retrieved daily, Monday-Friday****