



April 6, 2020

Dear Needham Public Schools Families:

With the advent of the COVID-19 virus, we will be conducting instruction to our students via video conferences and other forms of remote learning as part of the [Needham Public Schools Remote Learning Plan](#). Our teachers will be using technology platforms, for example, [Google Classroom](#) and [Seesaw](#), to engage and manage student learning. I write to inform you of our plans and to make families and students aware of certain state and federal laws and regulations that are designed to protect students and student privacy.

Many teachers will be recording their synchronous lessons for students who are unable to attend a class in “real time.” The primary focus of the video and audio recording will be on the lesson provided, not on the students in the class. However, questions and comments asked and spoken by students will be part of any recording. Only students assigned to that specific group/class will have access to the video recording. The recordings will not be made public in any capacity.

Parents have the opportunity to opt out if you choose to not have your child participate in any “real time” video conference that is recorded by the teacher. If you choose to opt out, the teacher will still hold the session and your child will be able to view the recorded video at a later time. We are required to inform you of the following regulations and ask for your consent for your child to engage in the remote learning experience and to inform you of the following NPS policy, state, and federal laws, including the so-called [Massachusetts Wiretapping Act](#) and the [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#), which are applicable to the implementation of the District's plan. Further, it is our expectation that students and parents/guardians understand and agree to the following conditions:

- Parents and students must refrain from recording any and all remote lessons.
- Parents/ guardians are permitted to observe online instruction in a non-disruptive manner.
- To the extent that remote learning opportunities provide access to confidential student information, all participants must agree ahead of time to refrain from disseminating any confidential student information about other student participants with any and all third parties.
- Students, and where appropriate parents/guardians, agree to engage in virtual educational experiences dressed appropriately, in a quiet, private area to the extent practicable given the circumstances, in order to minimize background noise and distractions and to protect the integrity of student engagement as well as student confidentiality.
- Parents/guardians and other household members who normally are not privy to day-to-day classroom and group service discussions agree to respect and keep confidential any personal or private information (e.g. disability status) inadvertently discovered about other students due to proximity to virtual education.
- Screenshots, pictures, audio/video recording and distribution of any virtual educational experience are prohibited in order to protect student privacy, proactively prevent potential cyberbullying, prevent the distribution of copyrighted materials and comply with Massachusetts law.
- Students must adhere to the District's [Responsible Use Policy](#)

Please go to the [Recording Video Conference – Opt Out Form](#) to let us know if you would like to opt your child out of lessons that the teacher is recording. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you agree to the above conditions and are providing your consent for your child to be recorded and for your child's participation in the District's [Remote Learning Plan](#).

Should you have any questions about the implementation of the district's Remote Learning Plan, please contact your child's principal or Dr. Terry Duggan, the Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning at [terry\\_duggan@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:terry_duggan@needham.k12.ma.us) . Please also reach out to us as soon as possible if you anticipate or become aware of any issues with your child accessing the remote opportunities provided by the District.

Sincerely,

Dan Gutekanst  
Superintendent