

INCREMENTAL WEATHER LEARNING PLAN

FOR SYSTEMWIDE CLOSURES

2026-2027

Overview

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is committed to maintaining safe, uninterrupted learning opportunities for students during emergency situations and severe weather conditions that prevent traditional in-person instruction.

Under Maryland law, Maryland, Code, Education 7-103.2, and guidance from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), local school systems may implement virtual instruction days after all built-in emergency closure days within the school calendar have been exhausted. These virtual learning days allow instruction to continue remotely while ensuring students continue progressing academically despite disruptions caused by weather or other emergencies.

The general requirements of the statute include:

➔ Board Approved

The county school board may authorize the use of virtual education days in severe weather conditions. Before this authorization is given to local school superintendents, the county school board must discuss this topic at an open meeting and vote affirmatively on the authorization.

➔ Available to the Public

The county school board shall publish the county's plan for virtual education on the school district's website.

➔ Synchronous Instruction

The county superintendent may decide to provide a day of virtual education (not less than four hours of synchronous instruction) only if the LEA has used all the days incorporated into its calendar for school closures for severe weather conditions.

➔ Attendance

Attendance must be tracked for both students and staff. There also must be opportunities for students to make up work missed during virtual education days when they return to in-person school.



The HCPS Inclement Weather Learning Plan establishes procedures and expectations for students, staff, and families when schools transition to remote instruction because of unsafe conditions, including but not limited to:

- Snowstorms and ice events
- Flooding or hurricane-related impacts
- Extended utility outages
- Public safety emergencies
- Other situations affecting school operations or transportation

Virtual instruction days will include a minimum of four hours of live, teacher-led instruction and additional independent learning activities. HCPS recognizes that remote learning cannot fully replace in-person instruction; however, this plan is designed to provide continuity, structure, and equitable access to learning when emergency conditions require school buildings to close.

The school system will continue to prioritize:

- ✔ **Student and Staff Safety**
- ✔ **Continuity of Learning**
- ✔ **Communication with Families**

Not every inclement weather event will result in virtual instruction. The first three days of closure due to inclement weather, shall not include virtual instruction. Depending on the severity and timing of the event, HCPS may determine that a traditional closure, delayed opening, or early dismissal is more appropriate.

Communication with Families and Staff

Clear communication is essential during emergencies. HCPS will provide timely updates regarding school operations and virtual instruction through multiple communication channels.

➔ Notification Methods

Families and employees may receive updates through:

- HCPS website
- Automated phone calls
- Text alerts and email notifications
- School-based messaging systems
- Social media platforms
- Local television and radio stations
- HCPS App Push Notifications

Announcements regarding virtual instruction will be shared as early as possible to allow families adequate time to prepare.

➔ Family Readiness Expectations

Families are encouraged to:

- Keep emergency contact information current
- Ensure students know their usernames and passwords
- Verify students can access digital learning platforms
- Keep student devices charged and available for home use, when applicable

Schools may periodically conduct inclement weather learning practice activities to ensure students and staff are prepared to transition smoothly if necessary.

Staff Responsibilities During Virtual Learning

All HCPS employees play an important role in supporting students during remote instruction.

➡ **School Administrators**

Principals and assistant principals will:

- Coordinate school-based virtual learning implementation
- Support teachers and instructional staff
- Monitor attendance and student participation
- Communicate with families and staff
- Ensure continuity of school operations

➡ **Teachers**

Teachers will:

- Deliver live virtual instruction aligned to curriculum standards
- Provide assignments and instructional materials
- Maintain communication with students and families
- Monitor student engagement and attendance
- Offer opportunities for students to complete missed work
- Only use break-out rooms with continuous adult supervision

Teachers will use Canvas, HCPS' Learning Management System, and Microsoft Teams embedded within Canvas to conduct instruction and provide student support.

Instructional Support Staff

Instructional Coaches and Teacher Specialists, including but not limited to, Reading Specialists, Math Coaches, Teachers of Supplemental Instruction, Title I Teacher Specialists, and Gifted and Talented Teachers may assist with:

- Academic intervention services
- Small-group instruction
- Instructional planning support
- Student engagement and outreach
- Enrichment services

Student Support Personnel

School counselors, behavior coaches, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and Pupil Personnel Workers will continue supporting students virtually by:

- Providing counseling and emotional support
- Assisting with crisis response
- Connecting families with community resources
- Supporting attendance and student wellness

Special Education Staff

Special educators, BCBAs, and related services staff will continue implementing support and services identified in student IEPs whenever feasible during virtual instruction. Services may include:

- Small-group virtual instruction
- Accommodations and modifications
- Related services delivered remotely when appropriate
- Collaboration with classroom teachers and families

Educational Support Paraprofessionals

Paraeducators, technicians, and inclusion helpers services may include:

- Supporting small group virtual instruction
- Providing individual behavior and academic support to assigned student(s)
- Provide services to students under the direction of a teacher

Virtual Instructional Program

HCPS will provide standards-based instruction through a combination of live instruction and/or independent learning opportunities.

Virtual instruction days will include:

At least
four hours
of synchronous
learning

Teacher-guided
instruction

Independent
assignments
and practice

Student
collaboration
and
participation
opportunities

Access to digital
and printed
instructional
materials

Teachers will maintain instructional continuity using district-approved learning management systems and digital platforms.

Early Childhood Programs: Grades PreK-1

Virtual learning for students in PK-1st grade will focus on developmentally appropriate instruction and learning experiences.

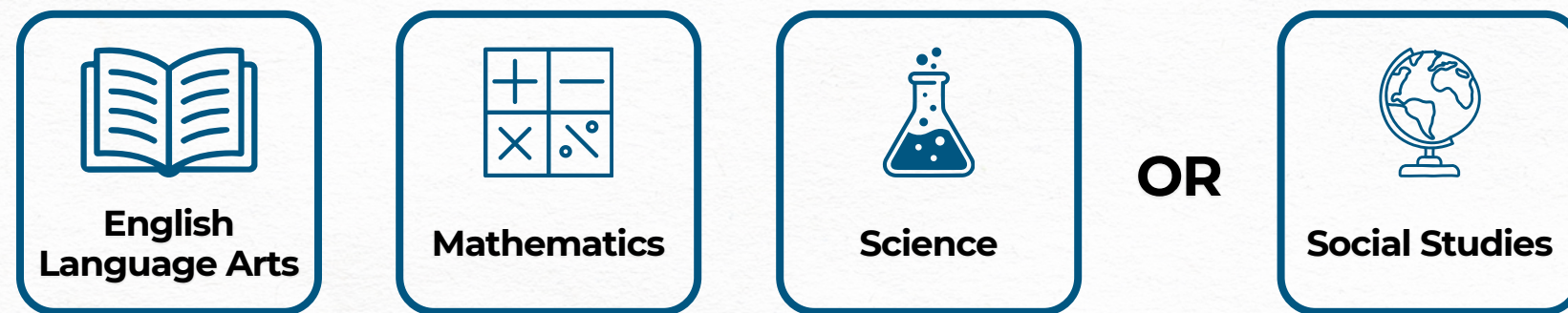
Teachers may provide:

- ✓ Printed instructional materials
- ✓ Hands-on learning activities
- ✓ Family guidance and support
- ✓ Offline learning opportunities

Programs serving students with disabilities will continue implementing individualized support whenever possible.

Elementary School Virtual Learning: Grades 2-5

HCPS will provide standards-based instruction through a combination of live instruction and/or independent learning opportunities.



Special area teachers may continue to provide instruction in the following areas based on the schedule that day:



Instruction may include whole-group lessons, small-group support, intervention, and independent activities.

Secondary School Virtual Learning

HCPS will provide standards-based instruction through a combination of live instruction and/or independent learning opportunities.

Instruction may include:

- ✓ Live virtual class meetings
- ✓ Collaborative learning activities
- ✓ Independent assignments
- ✓ Digital assessments
- ✓ Teacher office hours or student support periods
- ✓ Students enrolled in Advanced Placement, Career and Technical Education, or specialized academic programs will continue receiving instruction aligned with course requirements
- ✓ Students enrolled in dual enrollment should follow the course schedule provided at the beginning of the semester by HCC

Instruction may include whole-group lessons, small-group support, intervention, and independent activities.

Support for Multilingual Learners

HCPS remains committed to supporting multilingual learners during remote instruction. Services may include:

- ✓ Language development instruction
- ✓ Small-group virtual support
- ✓ Translation and interpretation services
- ✓ Adapted instructional materials
- ✓ Family outreach and communication support

Support for Harford Academy/Regional Programs

For students with IEPs whose teams have determined they cannot attend to or make meaningful progress through virtual instruction, specialized learning activities will be shared with parents/guardians in advance.

Teachers may provide:

- ✓ Printed instructional materials
- ✓ Hands-on learning activities
- ✓ Family guidance and support
- ✓ Offline learning opportunities

Attendance and Grading Expectations

Attendance remains required during virtual instruction days.

Students may be marked present through:

- > Participation in live instructional sessions
- > Submission of assignments
- > Completion of instructional activities
- > Communication with teachers during the school day
- > Excused absences will follow the HCPS attendance make up work protocol

Student Wellness and Social-Emotional Support

HCPS recognizes that emergency situations may create stress and anxiety for students and families.

During virtual learning periods, schools will continue providing access to:

School
counseling
services

Mental
health
supports

Social-emotional
learning
resources

Community
assistance
referrals

Crisis intervention
support when
necessary

Technology Access and Support

➡ Student Devices

HCPS provides students with access to digital devices needed for inclement weather days in grades 2-12. Students are expected to bring devices home when severe weather is anticipated. Students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grade will receive learning materials to support learning.

Families are responsible for:

- Charging devices regularly
- Caring for district-issued equipment
- Reporting technical issues promptly

➡ Internet Access

Schools will also provide alternative instructional options for students unable to connect virtually.

➡ Digital Learning Platforms

HCPS approved instructional digital resources may be embedded into Canvas to enhance the learning experience.

Staff can access the list of approved digital resources at: https://harford.instructure.com/users/414/external_tools/2833

Expectations for Digital Learning Conduct

Students participating in virtual instruction are expected to follow all HCPS behavioral and technology guidelines.



Students are expected to:

- Participate respectfully in online learning
- Use appropriate language and behavior
- Protect account passwords and login credentials
- Follow teacher directions during virtual instruction
- Use district technology responsibly



Students may not:

- Record or share virtual sessions without permission
- Access inappropriate materials
- Disrupt instructional sessions
- Misuse district technology resources
- Share personal login information with others
- Use breakout rooms in Teams

Failure to follow expectations may result in disciplinary action consistent with HCPS policies and the Student Code of Conduct.