

# Frequently Asked Questions Information for Families During School Closures Due to COVID-19

## IEP Meetings

### **1. My child's annual IEP meeting was scheduled prior to school closings or will be due in the next few weeks. What should I expect?**

All IEP meetings scheduled for the week of March 16, 2020 through March 20, 2020 were rescheduled. Beginning March 30, 2020, ESE Specialists received training on conducting IEP meetings through technology. No meetings will be held in-person until traditional school resumes. You will be contacted by staff from your child's school regarding any IEP meeting that was scheduled or will be scheduled using either videoconferencing or teleconferencing. For an IEP meeting to be held, the required participants must be available and able to participate. You will be provided with a Parent Participation Form indicating that the meeting will be held via teleconference/videoconference through electronic mail. Your electronic acknowledgement and agreement to participate in the virtual IEP will be documented as an electronic signature on the Parent Participation Form.

### **2. Can I go to school to have my IEP meetings?**

No. There are no in-person IEP meetings being held while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **3. Are parents required to participate in a virtual IEP meeting while schools are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak?**

No. It is understood that some IEPs will go beyond their annual review dates. Do not feel pressured to participate in a virtual IEP meeting if you are not comfortable. Your student will continue to receive ESE instruction and services even if their IEP has gone beyond the yearly review date. However, the use of videoconferencing has proven to be an effective way to have the participants, including the parents, to feel valued and heard.

### **4. If I participate in a compliant IEP meeting, how do I sign and receive the documents?**

All documents generated during a virtual IEP meeting will be provided electronically. If you can sign and return documents electronically, please do so. If you do not have the capabilities, the documents will be obtained upon the return to traditional school. The



district is currently working on options for parents to sign certain documents electronically.

### **5. What do I do if I need an interpreter to interpret a virtual IEP meeting?**

The parent asks the ESE specialist to request an interpreter for the meeting. The ESOL department is processing requests for interpreters to participate in virtual IEP meetings. If the parent is deaf or hard of hearing, an interpreter can participate in the meeting to assist the parent or family member. In some instances, there may be a meeting participant who is able to translate the IEP meeting. Please notify the school staff member inviting you to the IEP meeting that you need a translator. In some instances, if an interpreter is not available, the meeting may be postponed until traditional school resumes.

## **Evaluations/Placements**

### **6. What do I do if I would like my student to be evaluated?**

Please contact the ESE Specialist at your student's school via email to make the request. In-person evaluations will continue when traditional school resumes. If you have already given consent for evaluation, you may be contacted to complete those components that can be done remotely.

### **7. If my child's school schedules a virtual initial ESE eligibility meeting, how do I give consent for placement?**

All documents will be sent electronically while schools are closed. If parents can receive documents via email, portable document format (PDF) copies will be sent to parents for signature. Otherwise, parent consent for initial services will be obtained when traditional school resumes.

## **Other**

### **8. Can the school-based staff collaborate/communicate with our private service providers?**

Communication can occur with private providers with a signed release of information. Please remember that school staff will not have access to all the documentation previously received and may need a new release signed to ensure that they are collaborating with outside providers with your consent.

## **9. Are parents required to provide direct instruction to their child?**

Parents will be contacted by teachers/service providers who work with their child while school is typically in session. A temporary distance learning plan (TDLP) will be provided, and support will be provided to the student and parent while schools are closed due to COVID-19. Parents may elect to engage their child in the TDLP and resources provided.

## **10. How will ESE support services be provided?**

General education courses are supported by both the general education teacher and/or ESE provider(s). ESE teachers/providers will collaborate with general education teachers to fulfill the support needs of your child's IEP goals.

## **11. Will my child continue to receive ESE counseling?**

Yes. The ESLS Counselors are contacting parents via telephone and email to schedule appointments for counseling via multiple modalities. However, in-person counseling is not being offered at this time.

## **12. If I need assistance who do I call?**

For immediate assistance, please contact your child's teacher, during specific office hours. If you need assistance to log in, please contact your child's school for IT support. If you need assistance with your child's IEP, please contact your child's ESE Specialist.

## **13. How do I access my child's IEP?**

You provide a 10-digit cell phone number, language preference, and email address to your child's ESE Specialist. If you have not updated this information, you can use this link, <https://bit.ly/2WDEwxM> to add your information to a form and we will input the information for you. Once this information is updated in EdPlan, you will receive an email when any documents are completed in the system (i.e., IEPs, annual goals progress reports, etc.). If you have additional questions, please send an email to [edplanconnect@browardschools.com](mailto:edplanconnect@browardschools.com).

## **14. How will my student receive his/her accommodations?**

Your student will receive comparable accommodations based on what is listed in his/her current IEP/504 plan. You may discuss accommodations with your student's teachers. Teachers will provide the accommodations to the extent possible. For example, shortened assignments, extended time on assignments, guided study guides, etc. Other accommodations may need to be provided by parents/families (e.g., frequent breaks, quiet testing environment, reading directions, etc.). Please discuss

accommodations with your student's teacher(s) and/or ESE Specialist/504 liaison should you have any concerns.

### **15. What support will be provided for ESE classrooms?**

The ESLS Division is supporting ESE teachers/classrooms. Canvas support courses are available to teachers at all levels.

Additionally, weekly collaboration workshops are scheduled for ESE teachers in order to provide support. ESLS district curriculum teams are available between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. to provide technical support and consultation to teachers in the areas of curriculum, assistive technology, speech and language, and social emotional/behavior.

### **16. How will my student receive academic services and support from their ESE academic service provider?**

Your student will receive academic services through his/her teacher(s). Teachers have created Canvas courses highlighting instruction and assignments. Teachers also have office hours when parents and students may contact them for instruction and direction. Your child's teacher may use various methods of instructional presentation including Canvas, videos, email, phone calls, and text messages.

## **Distance Learning**

### **17. What will Distance Learning include?**

"Distance learning" is generally understood to refer to situations in which the student learns remotely - that is, the student and instructor are in different locations. It may incorporate both online and off-line options, such as instruction via conventional phone calls.

Your teacher may be providing live video conferencing, pre-recorded videos, and Canvas messages. Each teacher will provide specific directions on how they will communicate with you and your child.

While your child engages in remote learning, they may not be on the computer all day. Students need to log in every day to receive their assignments and instructions from their teacher(s). Some of the assignments can and will be done online; however, some assignments will be completed offline and then uploaded to their Canvas course for grading. Students may be asked to join a live webinar or watch an online video to receive the instruction they need. These webinars and videos will vary in length. As always, try to provide your child with as much support as possible to help them be

successful in their schoolwork.

### 18. What if my student doesn't know how to access Distance Learning?

Parents can contact the school's administrator for assistance or go to the District Learning Never Closes website at <https://www.browardschools.com/learningnevercloses> for how-to videos on logging into the portal (available in all languages). Please feel free to email your child's teacher(s) with any questions or concerns about distance learning.

### 19. What if I have a problem accessing support?

Please email or call your school's administrator if you have trouble accessing support.

## Parent Provided Questions

### 20. Are school personnel permitted by BCPS to use Zoom?

Yes, school staff can use Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Canvas as means to communicate.

### 21. Why is it *optional* for my teacher / therapist / support facilitator to use videoconferencing to interact with students?

The Broward Teachers Union and The School Board of Broward County Public Schools signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* on March 17, 2020. This memorandum states that a teacher has to interact via email, telephone, or through Canvas, no less than three (3) hours per day during their regular work hours.

### 22. My teacher / therapist / support facilitator is not using videoconferencing; therefore, my child is not receiving specialized instruction/services with fidelity. What is being done by BCPS to ensure that decisions on the use of videoconferencing are based on the best interests of the child?

"Distance learning" is generally understood to refer to situations in which the student learns remotely -- that is, the student and instructor are in different locations. It may incorporate both online and off-line options, such as instruction via conventional phone calls.

As is true when traditional school in buildings is in session, it is the teachers' discretion to determine the methodology or way instruction is provided to the students in their classrooms. Likewise, in the virtual classroom, all teachers determine how their instruction will be provided. Teachers are utilizing a variety of tools and methodologies

to support the teaching and learning process. One of these tools that some teachers are utilizing is videoconferencing. Not all teachers have elected to use this methodology to deliver instruction to their student. There is more than one way to provide instruction to students while traditional schools are closed.

**23. What requirements and recommendations has BCPS given to teachers as to the minimum standards and methods of teaching they should deliver?**

- General education to all students is provided through a learning management system platform (Canvas by Instructure).
- The move to virtual education has redefined the baseline of educational services delivered to all students. This new baseline is the “level of service” upon which special education modifications are to be taken from during the period of distance learning and remote learning.
- Special education expectation is that student accommodations are to be delivered, with appropriate modifications due to new modalities and new baseline of general services and the understanding the services provided will be delivered to the extent possible based on our current environment and ever-changing conditions.
- District ESLS staff have developed new and/or enhanced courses, available in Canvas, with resources and curriculum for school staff and families to deliver instruction and support student learning. We have also created online social networking groups (Yammer) to connect teachers and staff across the district, which has resulted in the exchanging of ideas, resources and support.
- Curriculum vendors have expanded and enhanced their online access to ensure our students and families can support student learning.
- Further information is at <https://www.browardschools.com/learningnevercloses>

**24. Are my child’s rights going to be taken away? Is my child’s IEP going to be changed?**

No, IEPs are being changed solely due to the school closures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Virtual IEP meetings will be held while schools are closed whenever the parents and the school agree and the required team members are present. However, in some instances, the current IEP cannot be fully implemented through virtual learning. Each student will receive a TDLP outlining the supports and services that will be provided while the student is in a distance learning environment. All of the procedural safeguard rights are intact while schools are closed.

**25. The daily schedule/work provided by my child’s teacher is not tailored to meet his/her needs. Who is monitoring if/when/how accommodations and instruction are being delivered in line with my child’s IEP?**

Parents should contact their child’s teacher to discuss the concern. They can also contact the ESE Specialist and/or Administrator to assist with the concern.

**26. Many parents are also working and cannot help their children's distance learning or are not equipped with the specialist knowledge to do so. What are the expectations on parents to assist with their child's learning and what are the expectations on teachers for teaching?**

Distance learning has created many challenges for educators and families. Establishing clear lines of communication between teachers and families is the first step to overcoming these challenges. Once this has been established, parents can communicate their needs and concerns and then work with the school to remedy them, with the understanding that our families are working as hard as they can to successfully navigate their children's learning and home environment.

**27. Will assessments, evaluations and IEP meetings continue and if so, how?**

**IEP meetings:** Yes. You will be contacted by staff from your child's school regarding any IEP meeting that was scheduled or will be scheduled using either videoconferencing or teleconferencing. For an IEP meeting to be held, the required participants must be available and able to participate. You will be provided with a Parent Participation Form indicating that the meeting will be held via teleconference/videoconference through electronic mail. Your electronic acknowledgement and agreement to participate in the virtual IEP will be documented as an electronic signature on the Parent Participation Form.

**Evaluations:** If you have already given consent for evaluation, you may be contacted to complete those components that can be done remotely. In-person evaluations will continue when traditional school resumes. In some cases, the school may have had no knowledge of any concerns prior to school closures. Please contact the ESE Specialist at your student's school via email to make the request and once school resumes, you will be contacted.

**28. How will counseling be delivered?**

The ESLS Counselors are contacting parents via telephone and email to schedule appointments for counseling via multiple modalities, but not face-to face at this time.

**29. Can a student be required by a teacher to join in group videoconferencing if they feel uncomfortable doing so?**

A student can participate in a videoconference and turn the camera off. The student will be able to hear the class and see the information the teacher is posting as well as answer questions or participate in group interaction. It is recommended that

students/parents reach out to teachers to address these types of concerns and collaborate on possible alternatives. Teachers should be encouraged to consult with families on a mutually agreed upon alternative and capture such arrangement in contacts.

### **30. How is my child's privacy being protected online?**

If a service provider is engaging with a group of students live via chat group, teleconferencing, or video conferencing, and a parent is in close proximity observing, it is possible that parents will see the names of the other students in their child's group. Teachers and service providers are cautioned to be mindful to not mention or share other private information about specific students during group sessions. It is important to note that under normal circumstances, a parent has the right to make an appointment to observe their child's classroom or special education service group. When observing in person on the school campus, a parent would also see the other students in the room and potentially hear their names. Additionally, if a parent is uncomfortable with their child participating in live group virtual activities due to privacy issues, the parent should express this concern to the student's teacher/service provider and collaborate to determine alternate methods for the student to receive the instruction.

### **31. What defines whether a student "attended" school each day?**

Student attendance is collected through the daily sign-on through Canvas.

### **32. My child is getting too much/too little/inappropriate assignments from their teacher. What should I do?**

Contact the teacher during the teacher's office hours to discuss the concerns.

### **33. Canvas is so confusing! Can teachers be told to place work in folders?**

The District is using the Canvas online platform. Continued professional development is being offered to instructional and non-instructional staff regarding the use of Canvas. For individual concerns, students/parents should reach out to the teacher.

### **34. My SLP told me that they are only allowed to call me through Canvas; is this the case?**

Staff are using a variety of modalities for tele/video conferencing. In order to maintain the security and privacy of a provider, they are advised to utilize the calling feature in Canvas. If they do not have access to this, they may use other methods to communicate with parents/guardians

### **35. My support facilitator set up videoconferencing with my student and claims they were then told not to. Can they or can't they?**

The decision to videoconference is at the teacher's discretion.

**36. Is the FDLRS Child Find Office accepting referrals?**

Yes, the Child Find Office is open to receive referrals for children birth to 5 years with suspected developmental delays/disabilities, however, Child Find Specialists are working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**37. Is there an online option for making referrals to Child Find?**

Referrals to Child Find may be completed online at [www.browardschools.com/esls](http://www.browardschools.com/esls).

**38. How do I contact the Child Find Office?**

The phone number for the Child Find Office is 754-321-7216.

**39. How do I reschedule my child's Child Find screening/evaluation appointment that was scheduled for March 15, 2020 or later?**

A Child Find Specialist and evaluators will contact all families by phone or email to reschedule appointments into the new schedule once Broward County Public Schools re-open.

**40. Will Child Find be completing screenings/evaluations for children under the age of 5 remotely?**

No. Evaluation specialists will reach out to all families with scheduled appointments to provide consultation and resources to use with children at home. Once Broward County Public Schools re-opens, all families will be rescheduled for in-person screenings/evaluations in the same order of the original appointments.