Parent Engagement:
Communicating and Advocating for Your Student’s Needs

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1. Establishing communication
2. Addressing student’s needs holistically
3. Planning for transitions
4. COVID Compensatory Services
1 Establishing communication

Families can play a proactive role in helping educators understand the best practices for communicating with them.

Parent Communication Letter

Dear [Name],

Thank you for allowing your staff to provide an education for our students this year! I am the parent of [Student's Name] and I am writing to share some information with you about the most effective ways to communicate with our family, particularly during periods of remote learning or hybrid learning.

The primary language spoken in our home is [language]. In order to communicate effectively with our family, it will be important for you and your staff to use this language whenever communicating with me, both verbally and in writing. [If families with students who have an IEP or 504 Plan, it is very important that the school translates all of my student's special education documents into this language and that an interpreter who speaks this language fluently is present at all meetings.]

The best way(s) for my student's teachers and service providers from school to communicate with me is by using the following method(s):

- Email:
- Text:
- Phone call:
- Voice mail:
- WhatsApp:
- Telegram app:
- Mail:
- Other:

Here is a summary of the days and times when it is convenient for me to receive communications from the school (and when it is not):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>These are days and times when it is CONVENIENT for the school to be in touch with me:</th>
<th>These are days and times when it is NOT CONVENIENT for the school to be in touch with me:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- My schedule changes regularly and it is not possible for me to tell you a day and time that is usually convenient. Please reach out to me in advance using the method I listed above to schedule a time when you need to speak with me.

- In the past, I have been able to communicate effectively with [Name of Contact Person]. When possible, I would appreciate it if this person can contact me with messages or information from the school.

- In the past, here are some things that have worked really well for home-school communications with my family:

This letter was developed by Massachusetts legal service education attorneys and is adapted from the Family Communication Questionnaires distributed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in its guidance on Creating Positive Learning Environments, issued on August 5, 2020.

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Addressing student’s needs holistically

- Relationships with adults and peers
- Self-regulation of emotions, behavior, and attention
- Academic (and non-academic) success
- Physical health and well-being
The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued a model Special Education Learning Plan that families can ask schools to use.

**COVID-19 Special Education Learning Plan**
IEP teams must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed.

Districts are required to fully consider information and input provided by parents regarding their child’s ability to access remote learning and the student’s progress during school closure.

Students can receive general education support, extra make-up IEP services, or new IEP services for new areas of disability.
1. Are there services in the student’s IEP that were not offered or that the student could not access during the period of suspended in-person instruction?
2. To what extent has the student demonstrated regression in skills?
3. Has the student failed to make effective progress towards their IEP goals and in the general curriculum?
4. Does the school or district have available general education recovery support that will support the student in recovering from educational gaps in learning or loss of skill, or the impact on student’s emotional well-being?
5. What COVID-19 Compensatory Services are necessary to address the student’s special education needs?
General COVID-19 Resources

https://www.massadvocates.org/covid19

- Parent Communication Letter
- Remote Education Log
- Sample emails requesting services
- Q&A on Special Education and Fall Reopening
- Q&A on Compensatory Services
General COVID-19 Resources

Creating Positive Learning Environments: Recommendations and Resources to Support the Social Emotional Well-being of Students, Staff, and Families

Promoting Student Engagement, Learning, Wellbeing and Safety During Remote and Hybrid Learning

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Online Intake Form

www.massadvocates.org
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