

Ware Middle School

2020-2021 Return to School Plan

KatieAnne DeMars, Principal

April Huckaby, Assistant Principal

DRAFT

IMPORTANT NOTE

During the 2020-2021 school year, we are committed to *moving forward* as a learning community by encouraging regular two-way communication and support from stakeholders and by addressing the academic, social, emotional, health, and well-being needs of our students, staff, and families. It is our promise and obligation to maintain a school climate that promotes the safe re-opening of our building based on research from the Center for Contagious Diseases (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as guidance from our governing body- the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE). Please know, we anticipate that there will be frequent updates that may require us to make changes to any of our "return to school" plans. While we incorporate all elements of the District-wide plans, the following guidelines/plans are specific to Ware Middle School in the Ware Public Schools.

LET'S GET STARTED!

When does school start?

A copy of the most recent 2020-2021 WPS School Calendar can be found [HERE](#). The state has reduced the learning day and hour requirements for the 2020-2021 school year to allow Massachusetts educators to participate in additional back-to-school planning and safety precautions. Students in elementary schools are required to complete 170 days and 850 hours annually. (Kindergarten's requirement has not changed at 425 hours). Our expected return-to-school date for students in **grades 4-6 is Monday, September 14, 2020.**

THREE POSSIBLE LEARNING MODELS:

The state is requiring each school district to plan for three possibilities for re-opening. The School Committee has agreed on the following three options as potential choices for the 2020-2021 school year. The School Committee will soon make its final recommendation on how the school year will start. We will notify families as soon as this decision is made.

*It is important to note that whatever the School Committee decides, a remote option will be a choice for parents to make.

1. **In-Person Learning**: Most of this document focuses on the steps we are taking to ensure a safe return for our students and staff this fall.
2. **Hybrid Model**: (Combination of In-School & Remote): The implementation of a hybrid model is where students alternate between in-school and remote learning. See the diagram below. Students on individualized education plans (IEPs) will be prioritized for receiving in-school instruction during the days when students are present.

Type of learning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In School	Cohort A	Cohort A	Deep cleaning	Cohort B	Cohort B
Remote (at home)	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort A & Cohort B	Cohort A	Cohort A

3. **Remote Learning Model:** In the event, schools need to close, online learning will be required throughout the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. We understand that this plan will need to look significantly different than our previous plan. Remote learning options will be available for individual students who cannot yet return to in-school, for students and families who choose this option, and for all students in the event of future classroom or school closures due to COVID-19. At this time, we are still working on our remote learning model, and those details will be forthcoming.

Student Orientations to New Learning Models

Staff recognizes the need to spend time reconnecting with students and helping them reflect on their identity as learners following the emergency school closure and a summer hiatus. This need to build strong relationships with students will be true in the fall of 2020, more than ever. In order to prepare our community to engage with the levels of challenge and rigor appropriate to each individual student within these new learning models, staff will work collaboratively with each other and with families and students to provide the solid social-emotional foundation and conditions for thriving during the coming school year, including attending to students' basic psychological needs prior to diving into more traditional academic content.

We all will be learning how to function within this new educational landscape, and to that end, staff will orient themselves and their students to the social norms of the physical and digital environments in which we will operate. As has become the expectation for all WPS staff, we will strive to make this instruction inclusive for the various identities all our students and families hold, and we welcome feedback and partnership in that endeavor from and with our community at large. Please see below the schedule of released orientation videos for our upcoming school year on our website:

Date of Video Release	Topics Covered
September 8	Welcome Back & Meet the Teachers
September 9	Entering and Exiting the building
September 10	Handwashing and Walking in Hallways
September 11	Tour of the classrooms

PLAN 1: In-Person Learning Model

1. Safety Procedures:

- ✓ **Masks:** All students in grades 4-6 are required to wear masks/face coverings that cover their nose and mouth. All students are responsible for their own masks. All adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings
 - Exceptions to wearing a mask/face covering will be made for those whom it is not possible due to medical conditions, disability impact, or other health or safety factors. Your child's doctor must write those requests.
 - Mask/face covering breaks will occur throughout the day and done so when students can be minimally 6 feet apart. Breaks ideally can occur outside or in well-ventilated spaces.

- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family. Extra disposable face masks should be made available by the school for students who need them
 - Reusable masks/face coverings provided by families should be washed by families daily.
 - Masks/face coverings are required to be worn by everyone on the bus during school bus transportation.
 - Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues. They should be especially considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers.
2. **Physical and Furniture Distancing:** students and staff are encouraged to aim for 6 feet of distance between individuals where feasible. A physical distance of 3 feet has been established when combined with other measures outlined in the list of safety requirements and is acceptable.
- ✓ If a student needs individualized assistance and the distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained, safety precautions such as masks, gowns, gloves, and plexiglass will be available to staff.
 - ✓ **Parent Screening of Children:** Checking for symptoms each morning by families and caregivers is critical and will serve as the primary screening mechanism for COVID-19 symptoms. We will be providing a checklist of symptoms and other guides to help families and students.
 - ✓ **Screening procedures** are not required at the point of entry to the school. However, school staff (as well as bus drivers) should observe students throughout the day and refer students who may be symptomatic to the school healthcare point of contact.
 - ✓ **Sanitizer will be available readily throughout the building, including a dispenser in each hallway, at a central location near the library, outside the gym, outside the cafeteria, and in each exterior doorway.**
 - ✓ **Washing/Sanitizing Hands:** Students and staff should make every effort to wash hands with soap and water. If doing so is not feasible at that time, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or at least 70% isopropanol content should be used. Hand sanitizer should be applied to all surfaces of the hands and in sufficient quantity that it takes 20 seconds of rubbing hands together for the sanitizer to dry.
 - Students and staff will wash/sanitize their hands at multiple points throughout the school day: before entry; after entry; after returning to the classroom for any reason; before eating; after eating; before dismissal; and as necessary.
 - ✓ **Washing/Sanitizing Building and Materials:** We will be prepared for frequent cleaning and sanitization of surfaces, especially high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails). All staff members will have roles and responsibilities as it relates to keeping our building sanitized. As mentioned, we will provide hand sanitizing at key locations in the building (e.g., entryways, bathrooms, classrooms) and install signage to enable effective health and safety procedures.
 - ✓ **Student groups:** to minimize the number of students who would potentially be exposed in the event of a COVID-19 event, *to the extent feasible*, elementary schools should aim to

keep students in the same group throughout the day, and middle school is encouraged to minimize mixing student groups to the extent feasible.

- ✓ **Visitors:** No visitors/parents allowed in the building.
- ✓ ALL IEP, 504, and Family/Teacher Conferences will be held virtually unless special accommodations are needed. Contracted services will be limited during school hours.
- ✓ If contractors need to be in the building while students and staff are present, they must wear masks and maintain 6 feet of distance.
- ✓ Delivery protocols for cafeteria and custodial supplies will include tracking and following masks and social distancing procedures.
- ✓ **Building Use:** Building use will not be allowed at this time.
- ✓ **Signage:** COVID-19 procedure signs will be posted on building entry doors, high traffic areas, and bathrooms to remind students and staff to practice physical distancing, wear masks, wash hands, and stay home when feeling sick. Common symptoms will also be included.

2. Morning Procedures:

- ✓ **Arrival:** Staff Support: Assigned staff will report to their duties at 8:45 am.
- ✓ Grades 4-6 Parent drop off: In a drive-thru manner, without getting out of vehicles, parents will drop off their student(s) in the front driveway between 8:45- 8:55 am. The school day will begin at 9:00 am. A WMS staff member will be present to guide students on arrival.
- ✓ **Buses:** There will be one wave of busses for students in grades 4-6 due to the limited capacity as instructed by DESE with a maximum number of 25 students per large bus and 12 students per small bus.
 - Students must sit in their identified seat when they enter the bus. We will unload one bus at a time. All students will proceed to their grade level entrance with 6 feet between them. WMS staff members will be stationed throughout the property to ensure a safe transition.
- ✓ **Breakfast:** Breakfast is offered for all students in grades 4-6. There will be two breakfast kiosks providing a bagged breakfast to any student who would like one. The two kiosks will be located:
 - At the main entrance where students drop off enters building
- ✓ **Entering the Classroom:** Staff will monitor student arrival to allow for a limited number of students to enter the classroom at a time (3-4), maintaining a 6 foot distance, to enter the classroom to unpack their belongings. Immediately afterwards, students will get their Chromebook/laptop and proceed to their assigned desk.
- ✓ **Late Arrivals:** It is essential for all students to arrive on time. However, if late arrival is necessary, students and parents will proceed to the front entrance where the Administrative Assistant will unlock the doors for the students to enter. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must remain outside where there will be a clipboard with a sign-in sheet. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must verify the late drop off with the Administrative Assistant via the exterior intercom system.
- ✓ **Classroom Routines:** identified by the classroom teacher (lunch count, lunch bag placement, jacket placement, etc.)
- ✓ **Lunch Counts:** Staff will document student lunch counts in ipass for the cafeteria by 9:30 am for all students.

- ✓ **Family Communication Folders:** We will not use classroom communication folders in an effort to minimize the spread of germs.
- ✓ **Notes from home:** Instead of sending in a handwritten note, families will be required to call or email the school administrative assistants with any dismissal changes, etc. Here is the information you will need to do so:
 - WMS Office number (413)967-6903
 - Donna Warburton- dvarburton@ware.k12.ma.us
 - Allison Kargol- allison@ware.k12.ma.us

3. Afternoon Procedures & Dismissal:

- ✓ **Parent Pick Up:** Parents will pick up students using the side parking lot. Students will be dismissed by homeroom and walk out to the cars. Staff will be outside guiding students. Parents will be dismissed by car row.
- ✓ **Afterschool program:** The afterschool program will be remote until November 1st. Parents will be receiving information regarding the program via email.
- ✓ **Buses:** Beginning at 3:15 pm, as buses arrive, we will announce specific bus dismissals via the intercom system. For example, when Bus 1 arrives, we will announce, "All students on Bus 1 may be dismissed," while all other students remain in the classrooms with their teachers. WMS staff members will be stationed throughout the property to ensure a safe transition.
- ✓ **Lunch:** All students will eat in their classrooms and have movement breaks outside as weather permits.
- ✓ Students with a nut allergy will have their classroom become a nut-free classroom. Notes and phone calls home will be made to the students in the classroom alerting parents of the allergy and asking for nut-free products.
- ✓ **Recess:** There will be a modified recess for all students in grades 4-6. All students must wash/sanitize their hands before going outside. All students will exit through their hallway exterior door with appropriate supervision. Each classroom will have an assigned area for which they must remain during recess with appropriate distancing throughout.
 - The assigned areas will be as follows: playground area 1, upper field, front of school driveway marked off.
 - Students will return from recess using their exterior hallway door.
 - Students will be required to wear their masks as they exit the building to recess, and the masks will remain with the student.
 - All students must maintain at least a 6 foot distance, which will be monitored. If students would prefer to sit on the grass and talk with friends, a "conversation circle" will be set up with distance markers. Throughout recess, staff will occasionally blow a whistle as an indicator that students must check their physical distancing and surroundings. In the event of inclement weather, indoor recess will occur in individual classrooms with laptops and or pre-planned activities.

4. Teaching and Learning:

- ✓ ***A process to address learning gaps***- Families and staff have expressed concerns that their students are "falling behind," as were families across the Commonwealth and nationwide.

We are in the midst of a pandemic, we share these same concerns, and we are working proactively to address them while following the guidelines of DESE, CDC, and WHO.

- ✓ **Standards:** Our current curricula, Wonders (i.e., English language arts), Go Math and ST Math (i.e., mathematics), will continue to be implemented in a meaningful way while addressing priority standards across content areas.
- ✓ **Intervention for Struggling Students:** Regardless of the chosen model, we will strategically provide reading and math intervention for students in all grades. Academic support from math and literacy coaches, English Language Learning support (ELL) and Special Education supports will be available.
- ✓ **Outdoor Learning:** Staff will be encouraged to utilize the outdoors when the weather permits. Students are encouraged to wear sunscreen, put on prior to arriving at school.
- ✓ **Specials:** Students will receive a modified specials class throughout the week. However, the content may differ from years past in an effort to deliver specials inside the student's classroom and or outdoors. More information to come.
- ✓ **Service Providers (OT, SLP, PT, Counseling):**
 - All service providers will conduct services in compliance with the student's identified plans and within the state and federal guidelines.
 - Service providers will be located in well-ventilated classrooms. In addition, portable Plexiglass dividers will be provided when needed.
 - Speech/Language Location: room 1
 - Occupational Therapy Location: room 12 1/2
 - Physical Therapy Location: room 12 1/2
 - Counseling: Ms. Jock's Office
 - Special Education Teachers: All service providers will conduct services in compliance with the student's identified plans and within the state and federal guidelines.

In the spring, all educators worked to identify "bridge standards"—those standards that they felt were essential for students to focus on at the end of the year, helping to smooth their entry to the next grade this fall.

During August PD, curriculum leaders and educators will begin to modify their lessons and activities to account for these significant variables. They will be engaged in professional learning to support their choices in instructional methods that are best suited to remote learning. This process will continue throughout the year, with the expectation that regular educators work collaboratively with their special education and English Language Learner (ELL) counterparts to co-plan lessons that support learning for all students.

The goal in all of this is to develop a curriculum that is flexible and sustainable under learning conditions that are unusual and challenging for all involved. One significant difference from the learning that happened in the spring is that expectations will be very different for student learning. Assignments will not be optional, and the focus will be on both the social-emotional well-being of the students (a major focus of our work in the spring) and their traditional academic growth. To the extent possible, we will be returning to the norms we all recognize—teachers teaching students directly, students working on assignments and passing them in for grades, and students engaged in a wider range of classes and

activities. Additionally, the various screening tools and diagnostic assessments typically used will continue to be used to identify areas of need for all students.

5. General Procedures:

- ✓ **Mask Breaks:** This will occur regularly throughout the entire school day as planned by each classroom teacher.
- ✓ **Bathroom Use:** Each classroom will have a designated bathroom location. Only one student per grade should use the bathroom at one time. In the event of an emergency, an identified staff member will stand and monitor students in the hallway, 6 feet apart.
- ✓ **Staff designated bathroom:** Staff will use the faculty bathroom area, only one staff member at a time. Signage on the door will help monitor this process.
- ✓ **Hallway Transitions:** Hallway transitions will be kept to a minimum. There will be student-friendly floor decals posted every 6 feet throughout all hallways and cafeteria.
- ✓ **Personal Items:** Students can only bring in necessary school items, and these cannot be shared. Students' belongings will be separated from others' and stored by each student's desk. Student lockers will not be utilized.
- ✓ **Faculty Room:** There will be a maximum capacity posted in the Faculty Room. One copier will be in the Faculty Room, and one copier will be in the computer lab. Staff will be assigned to the following identified rooms for lunch and or prep time: Rooms 14,15,16,12 and 10. There will be a maximum capacity listed on the door. If the room is at maximum capacity and you need to wait, please do so outside the door, away from other staff at 6 feet.
- ✓ **Nurse's Office:** To limit the number of students in the nurse's office at one time, staff members will contact Nurse Jen by phone, prior to sending a student down.
- ✓ **Behavioral Concerns:** Administrative support will always be available; however, this support will be reserved for cases that severely disrupt teaching and learning. These concerns will be addressed accordingly on a case-by-case basis. Students who have access to the SLC will still receive additional support, but we must be mindful of the practices stressed during this time. Students should not be "sent down" to the SLC space for a break. More information to come.
- ✓ **Staff Entrance/Morning Routines:**
 - Enter the building through the front door of the building by the Main Office.
 - All staff must wear a mask/face covering.
 - All staff must hand wash or use hand sanitizer upon entry.
 - All staff will scan QR code to sign in for the day
 - Staff who wish to use the faculty room refrigerator, will place their lunch inside and remove during their assigned lunchtime. It is encouraged that staff place ice packs in lunches to avoid having to place their lunch in a common refrigerator.
 - All mail will be delivered to classrooms at least every other day to avoid large groups of staff from entering the Faculty Room.
 - Daily bulletins will be provided via email.

6. Social/Emotional Health and Wellness:

- ✓ There will be an enhanced focus on mindfulness and community building during re-entry in order to support students' emotional wellness during the back to school transition. Teachers will allow space in class to talk about student experiences over the spring/summer and

feelings about returning/new protocols. There will be time for orientation, practice, and reflection/discussion time for new rules and procedures, which will be incorporated, especially for new-to-the-building students and special populations.

- ✓ Social-Emotional Learning will be taught to all classes, which will include the All-Star and Second Step curriculum. Second Step teaches skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, friendship skills, and problem-solving. These skills will be carried over and reinforced in classrooms and across the school community.
- ✓ Frequent student check-ins with a caring adult/point person. Time for daily reflection will allow the class, as a group, to process thoughts and feelings about this pandemic experience.

PLAN 2: Hybrid Learning Model

- ✓ All of the procedures and plans outlined as a part of the in-person model will occur for the hybrid model, too. However, the implementation of a hybrid model is where students will alternate between in-school learning and remote learning to provide smaller class sizes. It is important to note that the hybrid model will meet the needs of special populations and provide staff with needed professional development, time for remote teaching, and planning time.
- ✓ The following hybrid schedule represents two days of in-school instruction and three days of remote learning for each cohort. The cohort will be assigned by building principals.

Type of learning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In School	Cohort A	Cohort A	Deep cleaning	Cohort B	Cohort B
Remote (at home)	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort A & Cohort B	Cohort A	Cohort A

- ✓ Cohorts will be diverse, inclusive, and heterogeneous (mixed ability groups). The learning students do during the in-person weeks will be the same for both cohorts. The learning students do during the remote days will be the same for both cohorts.
- ✓ On in person days, students will arrive at school between 8:45-8:55 am with a 9:00 am start. Please see the above section labeled: "Parent Drop off grades 4-6". The student school day will end at 3:05 pm with a 3:10 pm parent pick up and a 3:15 pm buses outside the building.
- ✓ At this time, all special education students, in grades 4-6 with significant needs or disabilities that significantly impact their ability to learn, will attend for as many "in-person" days as physically possible as determined by the building Principal and SPED Department.
- ✓ On the days of remote learning instruction, all students in grades 4-6 will participate in the online learning tasks as assigned by the teacher. Attendance is critical and will be taken every day, regardless of a student learning in person or remote. On Wednesdays, when both groups are remote, educators will have office hours and will guide the learning of their classrooms online. The remote schedule and student assignments will be forthcoming.
- ✓ Here is a **sample schedule** of what the Remote Learning Model may look like:

In-School Schedule		Remote
8:45-9:00	Enter building & eat breakfast in the classroom	Log in to our identified online platform for attendance between 8:30-9:00am. Complete ELA, Math & Social Emotional assignments identified by your student's teacher for the scheduled day. Teachers will hold an online virtual meeting and office hours. These schedules TBD.
9:10-10:50	ELA & Writing	
10:50-11:00	Handwashing/Sanitizing & suggested mask break	
11:00-11:45	Lunch/Recess	
11:45-11:50	Handwashing/Sanitizing	
11:50-12:15	ST Math	
12:15-1:40	Math	
1:40-2:03	Science/Social studies	
2:03-2:55	Specials	
2:55-3:05	Handwashing & suggestive mask break	
3:05-3:15	Parent Pick Up	
3:15-3:25	Bus Dismissal	

**Masks break will be given to students throughout the day determined by classroom teachers. Students must be given a minimum of 3 masks breaks during the school day, not including lunchtime.

PLAN 3: Remote Learning Model

We have reviewed the strengths and challenges of our former remote learning experiences and are actively making significant improvements to remote instructional delivery and consistent student participation. Currently, we are in the process of preparing the implementation of a student-friendly online platform (e.g., Canvas). Please visit the district website and Facebook page for up to date information on the remote learning platform.

As we move forward, there will be continued work and professional development in order to ensure the most meaningful learning experience for all students.

Please know, as we develop and refine the remote model, we will consider the following:

- ✓ Identify and teach priority standards for English language arts and mathematics.
- ✓ Develop a material delivery system to get students the physical items they need to work from home.
- ✓ Maximize collaboration to develop remote lessons, which might include videos made by teachers or videos found online.
- ✓ Establish a set schedule and routines.
- ✓ Provide a daily morning meeting with required attendance.
- ✓ Establish that assessments and accountability for participation will be used.
- ✓ Actively engage students in all aspects of the remote learning plan.
- ✓ Design a model that will allow students to work independently, but with support as needed. Students should be challenged but not frustrated.

✓ Here is a **sample schedule** of what the Remote Learning Model may look like:

Remote Learning Model	
8:45-9:00	Log in to our identified online platform for attendance to be taken between 8:30-9:00am.
9:00-9:30	Virtual classroom meeting- connections & today's ELA assignment launch
9:30-10:30	Complete ELA Assignment
10:30-10:45	Screen Break
10:45-11:15	Virtual Classroom Teacher/Para Check-in and Math assignment launch
11:15-11:45	Lunch
11:45-12:45	Work on Math Assignment
12:45-1:15	ST Math Time
1:15-2:00	Social/Emotional Check-in with Ms. Jock & Specials
2:00-2:30	Virtual Teacher/Para Check-in and Science/SS Assignment launch
2:30-3:00	Science/SS work time
3:00-3:30	Teacher Office Hours if needed

Both Plans 2 and 3 will require a parent/guardian to complete a Remote Learning Commitment Letter. This letter is an agreement between the parent and school that the student will participate 100% in the remote learning assignments and activities as described in the plan to the best of their ability. It also commits the student to the remote learning plan (either hybrid or full) for a required amount of time, as specified in the form. We ask parents to give the school 3-4 weeks of time in order to transition a student from remote to in-person learning. There will be no exceptions to this process.

Student Attendance:

Regular attendance is important to a student's academic success and establishing positive relationships. Daily attendance will be taken each morning. Students must participate in all aspects of both hybrid and remote learning plans. If students do not actively participate and or complete the assignments, they may be retained in the same grade level for the following school year.

Feedback, Grading, and Assessments:

Continued guidance from the Commissioner is expected under this section. More information to follow.

In closing, it is our promise and obligation to maintain a school climate that promotes the safe re-opening of our building based on research from the Center for Contagious Diseases (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as guidance from our governing body- the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE). Please know, we anticipate that there will be frequent updates that may require us to make changes to any of our "return to school" plans. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to educating your students again!