

## GORHAM SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

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To: Gorham School Department Parents/Guardians  
From: Heather J. Perry, Superintendent of Schools  
Re: 2020-21 Snow Day Learning Expectations

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In a year where nothing seems all that “normal”...here we are, once again, addressing a topic that we all likely thought was “sacred” in schools, almost a “right of passage”...the celebrated snow day! As with everything in this COVID 19 world, perspectives are different, needs have changed and lots of things are being redefined. One thing that now becomes a possibility for our schools in this COVID 19 world full of learning in many different forms, is the relative elimination of traditional snow days.

It is our belief that COVID 19 has created enough stops and starts and other inconsistencies in instruction due to having to operate within a hybrid learning model and that using traditional snow days would only add to this problem. Therefore, the District Leadership Team has worked tirelessly to create a mechanism whereby on any traditionally called “snow day” we would be able to provide instruction for students to continue their learning at home. This could be done in situations where internet access is easily obtained or in situations where power outages and other weather related barriers may not allow students or staff to directly access the internet. Here’s how we see things working:

- Inclement weather is forecasted. IF POSSIBLE, a message will go out the day before letting families know that the “Snow Day Meal Plan” will be implemented and that snow day meals may be delivered to student homes or sent home with students the day before the storm.
  - *Note #1: Parents will need to sign up for this service in advance. More details on that in Superintendent Perry’s Blog Update coming up on Oct. 30, 2020.*
  - *Note #2: If the storm was not predicted, meals may NOT be made available to families on the day before the storm.*
- A FINAL CALL for a “Snow Day” will be made in the morning as is typical. Notifications will be made in a similar manner as in the past, using the messenger system, website, social media, and TV/radio outlets.

- If a Snow Day is called, students will access their Snow Day Learning Plans from home (*Note: these plans would be provided by their classroom teachers and include a plan for what to do if power is on and internet access is available via their devices as “normal” - i.e. See Saw K-3 and Google Classroom Gr. 4-12 - and a plan for what to do if power is a barrier for either the student or the teacher to access the internet*).
- Students would work to complete their snow day learning assignments while at home during the snow day.
- Completed work would be turned in either digitally on that same day, or physically on the next face to face day of instruction for that student.
- Feedback would be provided by the teacher, and learning would continue.

Overall, we would work to make this snow day learning cycle as close to the student’s experience on their typical at home learning days as possible to allow for maximum consistency of practice.

All cancelations for snow days will be announced via our website, via our school messenger system, via our social media sites, via TV Stations (Channel 6, Channel 8 and Channel 13), and via Radio Stations (WGAN 560 AM, WMGX 93.1 FM, WPOR 101.0 FM, WYNZ 100.0 FM, WTHH 99.9 FM, WLAM 1470 AM and KISS 97.9 FM).

This new method of working through snow days will be utilized whether we are in the red, yellow, or green models. We would only utilize early releases, or late start days in a green model.

None of this, as you might imagine is an exact science - especially when dealing with Maine’s unpredictable weather in the midst of a Pandemic. The Gorham Schools will always do its best to make the right call, however, please know we understand that it is always the parent/guardian who makes the final decisions regarding the safety of your student(s). If there is ever a circumstance where school has not been canceled or delayed, yet you feel as though it is best to keep your child home because of road conditions please do not hesitate to do so.

Thank You,

Heather J. Perry,  
Superintendent of Schools