



FAQs

Spring 2017

1. What is *Learn Anywhere*?

The Wakefield Public Schools, guided by our mission to inspire the love of learning in all students, are committed to providing opportunities for our students to discover learning in the world in which they live, not bound by the four walls of a classroom or the time-frame of a school day or year.

At this time, the *Learn Anywhere* project is comprised of three projects:

- ⇒ Distance learning to replace cancelled school days
- ⇒ Offering online, blended course electives with a partner high school
- ⇒ Enriching and personalizing summer learning opportunities

Guided by the WPS Instructional Strategy, these three initiatives begin to offer a glimpse of how we can enrich and personalize student learning - anywhere, anytime.

The *Learn Anywhere* School Cancellation Project

2. Is this like the “Blizzard Bag” models I have heard about?

Learn Anywhere is a similar idea, but:

- Provides greater flexibility for assignments and due dates
- Encourages students to use digital tools and products when possible
- Allows for personalization, choice, creativity and passion-based learning
- Does not use compliance as a measure of learning or success of the program

3. What happens if the student is unable to complete the assignment at home?

Some students may not have access to a device or Internet at home or, because of the unpredictable nature of cancelled school days, might experience a loss of power. Students may have left resources or materials at school on an unexpected snow day.

A central tenet of the *Learn Anywhere* School Cancellation Project is that student work will never be due on the day that students return to school.

This way, we can ensure that all students have equitable access to complete assignments.

4. What if a parent is not able to be home to support a young child with work completion? What if a student requires IEP or ELL support services to complete curriculum assignments?

One of the reasons that end products are not due on the day following a school cancellation day is so that we can ensure that students have the time and support services they may need to successfully complete their assignments. State and federal laws guarantee the right of a student with a disability to receive accommodations or modifications as documented in their IEP or 504 plans.

5. How do students access their assignments?

Students will access their assignments using the platform identified by their classroom teacher: either Google Classroom or the *Learn Anywhere* website, learnanywhereproject.org. Students will be able to view their assignments on a home computer, their device, or cell phone.

Teachers will post learning expectations for students no later than the morning of the cancelled school day, but may prepare and post their assignments as early as the summer, week, or day before. This depends on the teacher's planning style and their students' needs. Teachers will communicate with students and parents what to expect.

6. How will students and their parents know about the *Learn Anywhere* School Cancellation Project and remember what to do on a school cancellation day?

Students and parents will receive information about the *Learn Anywhere* project in the fall of each school year with additional reminders at the beginning of the winter-weather season. Teachers have the option to remind students before and throughout the cancelled school day using Twitter, Google Classroom, email, or other communication tools the class uses. Some teachers may even offer digital office hours to help with home assignments.

7. Is there a central place for all *Learn Anywhere* information?

Yes. All information for *Learn Anywhere* will be on the learnanywhereproject.org website. There will be a link on the main page of the Wakefield Public Schools website as well as all school websites for easy access.

8. What is expected of students as evidence that they have completed their work?

How students will demonstrate their learning will vary based on the teacher, but students should expect to submit an end product of their work. Often the teacher will provide options for students to use digital tools to present their learning.

9. When will assignments be due?

As noted earlier, student work will never be due on the day that students return to school. Teachers have three options for assignment types:

- **Short term**, built into the current unit of study/curricular plan, with the due date several days after the cancelled school day. Teachers and students who use Google Classroom and/or online curriculum regularly may just continue with “business as usual” on the cancelled school day.
- **End of unit**, tied into the essential question or big ideas of the curriculum unit and due near the end of the unit.
- **Longer term**, to include weekend(s) and/or vacation(s), to facilitate visits to museums, cultural and historical sites, art events, etc., embracing the mindset that learning can happen anywhere. Teachers will provide a range of opportunities for students, both locally and regionally, accounting for students who may need or wish to walk or use public transportation.

Examples of the types of assignments teachers might develop for each of these are available on the *Learn Anywhere* website.

10. How long will the total of all assignments take for students to complete?

Assignments will be reasonable in length for the developmental age and grade level of students, and we are mindful of the unique opportunity for family time on school cancellation days. Emphasis is placed on the *quality* of learning experiences, not on quantity or compliance.

Estimated times for school work completion per grade band will be:

- K-2 – approximately 60 minutes
- Gr. 3-4 - approximately 90 minutes

- Gr. 5-8 – approx. 20 minutes per subject area that would have met on the cancelled cycle day
- Gr. 9-12 – approx. 30 minutes per subject area that would have met on the cancelled cycle day

REMINDER: Some teachers may provide options for students to complete assignments over upcoming weekends or vacations. The teacher will determine and communicate when the work is due.

11. What if a student would have been absent on that day? Is he or she obligated to make up the assignment?

Just like any other time a student is absent, students will make up the work just as they would if school were in session.

12. What if a teacher would have been absent on that day?

Just like any other time a teacher is absent, the teacher leaves assignments for students to complete as soon as he/she is able.

13. What if a student does not complete his/her assignment?

Teachers will respond to missed work just like they would any time a student does not complete class work or homework.

14. What about compensatory services for students with IEPs?

Similar to our procedure when a related provider (Occupational, Physical, or Speech Therapist), is absent for multiple school days/sessions, the school district will offer compensatory services. Students' skills are not typically impacted when they miss a minimal amount of services, so parents may wish to waive compensatory time and ask that their child continue with his/her regular schedule. For parents who wish to schedule compensatory services, the Special Education liaison will work with the family to schedule sessions at a mutually convenient time, which may be adjacent to a regular session, before or after school, or as an Extended School Year service.

15. How do we know that the program is successful?

The school department will regularly complete a program audit to ensure that students engage with quality, curriculum-based assignments and that student learning is commensurate with a regular school day.

16. Who should I speak to if I have a question or a concern?

It is always best to communicate directly with the teacher first. School administrators are also always available to answer questions and provide support.

