

PORTAGE AREA JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL
Questions and Answers to the COVID-19 School Closures

Q: When will we return to school?

A: Recently Governor Wolf closed schools indefinitely. Which means his administration has no set date for schools to reopen. They will monitor the situation and make decisions as the days progress.

Q: Do I have to continue with school this year?

A: Absolutely, your attendance will be counted. If you do not engage with your classes and teachers, you will receive a FAIL for the marking period and may end up with attendance issues.

Q: Will I get a grade for the 3rd marking period?

A: Yes, we were only 5 days from finishing the 3rd marking period before school closed. We are allowing students to make up or submit work until April 6. We will then move to the 4th marking period.

Q: Will I get a grade for the 4th marking period?

A: Grades for the 4th marking period will be PASS/FAIL and will not impact GPA. Those communicating with their teachers and actively participating will PASS. Those students totally disengaged in a class will FAIL.

Q: How will GPA & class rank be determined?

A: Only the first 3 marking period will be used to calculate GPA and class rank.

Q: What about my VHS class. Will I receive a grade?

A: You will receive a grade from VHS as those classes continued during the closure. We will place the grade on your report card if we receive one from VHS. It will also be counted toward your GPA if you selected this option.

Q: I am a senior and only needed a few credits to graduate. What do I do?

A: You should stay engaged in all of your classes and earn a PASS on your report card.

Q: I have a job and am considered essential. How can I take class?

A: You will need to engage with each of your teachers on a regular basis to earn a PASS. School is now back in session.

Q: When will report cards for the 3rd marking period go out?

A: We will post report cards to your E-schoolbook log-in. You should log-in just like you do to check your grades.

Q: What will happen with Independent Reading?

A: Marking periods 3 and 4 will have an "NG" (No Grade) on the report card. All points earned for the 3rd and 4th marking period of this year will carry over to the 1st and 2nd marking period of next school year.

Q: Do seniors who owe reading points need to complete them?

A: Yes, Mrs. Herman has emailed each senior owing points to discuss the school's plan.

Q: Will the packets we received be graded?

A: No, the packets are for your review and enrichment. Your level of engagement is what will be assessed. Did you attempt to complete them? Did you reach out to your teacher if you had questions?

Q: Can we go to our lockers?

A: No, the building is closed to all non-essential personnel. Once we get an all clear, we will allow student and parent visitors.

Q: What should seniors do with our scholarship packets.

A: Please email Mrs. George mageorge@mustangmail.org to make arrangements to drop off your packets. We have no idea what will become of some scholarships as the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies is currently closed by order.

Q: How do I get a transcript for college.

A: Email Mrs. George at mageorge@mustangmail.org and Mrs. Bednarski at rbednarski@mustangmail.org to communicate your transcript needs.

Q: Will we have spring sports and extracurriculars?

A: That remains to be determined but as days go by the chances become less likely.

Q: Will we have graduation?

A: We will do everything in our power and within the Governor's orders to recognize our seniors with commencement. As time goes by, hopefully restrictions on social distancing can be lifted and we can develop a plan

Q: What date will be on my diploma?

A: We are placing June 2020 on the diplomas. We are certain you will have quite a story to tell as year's go by if someone asks you what day did you graduate?

Q: Will we have baccalaureate?

A: Baccalaureate may be cancelled this year depending on our return date.

Q: Will we have awards night?

A: Awards night may not take place if we are still in this challenging situation.

Q: I have been invited to the National Honor Society. How is induction going to work?

A: As we move through the weeks, we will make a plan. If we are not coming back, we will hold NHS inductions on-line.

Q: What will be our last day of school for this year?

A: a date has yet to be determined. We will work with the school board and make a final determination that will be communicated to all.

Q: How is attendance taken?

A: Students will be contacted by phone or email almost daily. Active participation is essential. Teachers will keep administration informed of students that are not engaging by phone, email or TEAMS app.

Q: What is the TEAMS app?

A: it is a free app in your Microsoft 365 account. It is a great tool for collaboration and communication. You should log-in and review the TEAMS app. Feel free to explore and reach out to a few of your teachers.

Q: Can TEAMS be accessed on any device?

A: Yes, TEAMS is available on all types of devices, desktops, laptops, tablets, and phones. There is an app that could be very helpful to you when navigating teams. The app is not necessary to be successful with TEAMS.

Q: Can I enter the school?

A: No, not at this time. We have cleaned and disinfected the building and are hoping to provide a sanitary building if and when students return. If approved, we will detail our plan for students to enter the building in groups to retrieve items.

Q: How will community service be handled?

A: Each student in grades 7-12 will earn 5 community service hours for social distancing at the Governor's order. This will cover the 3rd and 4th marking periods of this academic year.

Q: What if I don't have Internet access?

A: You should have been contacted by phone by one of your teachers. You should have informed your teacher of the issue. Your teachers will work hard to stay in contact with you by phone and may provide additional worksheets to be completed.

Q: Will I get more phone calls from my teachers?

A: Depends, if you can engage using email and TEAMS, you are most likely to hear from your teachers using those tools. If you do not engage in class or do not have Internet access, phone calls and possible packet deliveries will take place.

Q: Will We have a Prom?

A: We will do everything in our power to have a prom. Might not be the date or location currently booked. We may have to get creative and be both flexible and understanding. There is a chance a prom may not occur.

Q: How will we turn in items the school owns?

A: Once we get approval, we will systematically open the building for students to visit and access their lockers. A plan has been developed to return items if we are not returning.

Q: I have a school owned uniform or equipment. Do I need to turn it in soon?

A: Mr. Burkett will work with our coaches to schedule equipment return if seasons are cancelled. Returning items will not take place until seasons are cancelled and the governor's administration informs us it is safe to do so.

Q: I have been feeling depressed and or confused during this time. Where can I get some help?

A: We would encourage you to reach out to Ms. George at mageorge@mustangmail.org, Mr. Comperatore at dcomperatore@mustangmail.org or Mrs. Dividock at ldividock@mustangmail.org. Each of these professionals can assist you.

Q: I am afraid someone might pass COVID-19 to me or my classmates if we return to school. Should I be worried?

A: It is certainly a concern for all. This is one of the very reasons the governor's team has closed schools indefinitely. They will only allow students back to class if they feel it is safe to do so.

Q: I am requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, how do I get it?

A: email your teacher and request the letter of recommendation. The teacher can send it to an office secretary to print on school letterhead. We will then contact the teacher the letter is ready for their signature.

Q: I am failing a course, what can I do?

A: You should be emailing your teacher now and completing any work which will help improve your academic standing. Three marking periods will be averaged to determine final grade.

Q: I have a 4th quarter class that will be starting April 8th. How will I be graded?

A: New 4th quarter classes will be graded PASS/FAIL and will not impact GPA.

Q: I noticed my teacher changed in one of my classes. Why did that happen?

A: A few courses have added a co-teacher that may be planning enrichment and review or new material if we move forward. This is simply to help our staff with lesson development.

Q: I didn't schedule for next school year. How will I select my courses?

A: Mrs. George will be reaching out to all who still need to schedule for next year. She will be working with you via email or phone.

Q: I have a parking permit. When will I turn it in if we don't come back.

A: Once we allow student access to the building, you can turn your parking pass in to the office.

Q: I have a library book I will need to turn in.

A: Once we allow student access to the building, you can return your book to the library.

Q: Will we still have field trips and events if and when we return?

A: If deemed safe by the Governor's administration those activities may remain scheduled, however they are most likely to be cancelled for the remainder of this year.

Q: I wanted to get a worker's permit. How can I get one?

A: Email Mrs. Bednarski at rbednarski@mustangmail.org. She will inform administration and we will work with her and the student to get the worker's permit completed and delivered.

Q: I am a learning support student and will need help with my classes. How will this happen?

A: The learning support teacher in charge of your IEP will be monitoring your progress and contacting you frequently. Be sure to reach out to him or her if you have a need?

Q: My child's IEP is due. When will the meeting take place?

A: we do have a few students with IEP's that are due now or in the near future. PDE asked that we work closely with families and attempt to conduct IEP's as close to deadlines as possible. Your child's case manager will be contacting you to schedule the IEP meeting. It will take place over the phone or via a web conference. Documents will be mailed home for signature and return to the school.

Q: My child was in the middle of an evaluation. How will this process work?

A: Our school psychologist continues to work on evaluations. He will be in touch via phone or email. Some evaluations require significant data and may need to be delayed until such data can be obtained.

Q: Will the Wellness Center be open soon?

A: The Wellness Center has been cleaned and will remain closed until deemed safe by the Governor's administration to return.

Q: I wanted to complete the 6 hours of behind-the-wheel Driver's Education in the summer. How do I do this?

A: Mr. Josh Burkett sets up our summer driver's education program. He will reach out to his driver's education students to set up a summer driving schedule. Please realize, the program may not run if we are not cleared to do so.

Q: Is there a cost for the driving portion of Driver's Education?

A: No, the 6 hours of behind-the-wheel training does not have a fee.

Q: Will it be safe to return at the end of August?

A: As we are seeing around the globe, the virus must run its course. It will pass just as other viruses such as the flu have.

Q: Will my dual enrollment classes continue?

A: Both Penn Highlands and Mount Aloysius have stated if we continue the courses, they will offer the credits. You will receive a grade for your college transcript, but a PASS/FAIL for your high school report card. However, the second semester College English course from Penn Highlands was suspended prior to the school closure.

Q: I am involved in activities outside of the school. They plan to use the school. Will they be able to do so?

A: As long as school remains closed, no person or organization will be using the school's facilities.

Q: What will school be like if we return this year?

A: We will get right back to work, following our 4th marking period schedule.

Q: State testing was cancelled. What does that mean to me?

A: Grades 7 & 8 will not have the PSSA's this year. Any student scheduled for the Keystone will not take the exams this year. However, the requirement does not go away. You will need to take the 3 exams next year and as often as necessary until the conclusion of your 11th grade year.

Q: I am a Portage student that attends school somewhere else. Will my school be starting back up?

A: Yes, your placement will be contacting you to get back on track. You will not be returning to the physical building of your placement until we are cleared to do so.

Q: I attend APAVTS. Will we be starting back up?

A: Yes, APAVTS is making plans to teach students remotely. Although very difficult, we are certain the APAVTS team is working very hard to meet your needs?

Q: Will I still have the chance to take the NOCTI and APAVTS?

A: Please direct this question to your teacher or administration at APAVTS.

Q: Will scholarships and/or awards still be presented to students?

A: If these items are awarded and we do not have an awards program. We will try and recognize students during the presentation of diplomas.

END 4/1/20

New questions will be added below
