



# INTERNET ACCESS RESOURCES

The Winchendon Public Schools has collected these resources to support students during remote learning. We will continue to try to find solutions for families without internet and will update this document as we find new options. While we are offering this support, we highly recommend you reach out to internet providers or your cell phone carrier to ensure the information below is accurate and applies to your plan.

## HOME INTERNET BASICS

A quality broadband connection is required to ensure students are able to complete the educational tasks assigned to them by their teacher.

This document will help guide families on recommended remote learning connection speeds, how to assess their current home internet bandwidth, and resources to improve or upgrade your home internet access.

### *Internet Recommendations:*

WPS recommends a household internet speed of at least 25/5 (Down/Up Megabits per second) and at least 5 Mbps per remote learning device. We strongly recommend at least 50/10Mbps for larger households.

### *Suggestions for Improvements:*

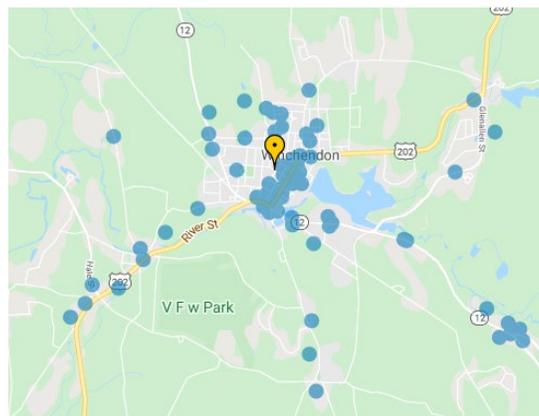
- Turn off your idle devices; i.e. PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo Switch, and limit your use of streaming services during remote learning times
- Check where your router is located. Placing it in a cabinet, basement, or behind doors/walls will only degrade the connection. Instead, place it in an unobstructed central place.
- Consider a wired connection. If possible, a wired connection to your router will always be faster and more reliable than using a wireless (Wi-Fi) connection.
- If your service was installed more than two years ago, contact your ISP to see if they will upgrade the router you are using. Newer routers can be significantly faster and more reliable.
- A router refresh (Reboot) occasionally will improve the speed if there is a noticeable lag in connection.
- Wi-Fi extenders are an inexpensive device that can improve range throughout your household.

# FREE WIFI HOTSPOTS

Comcast is providing **FREE** Wi-Fi to anyone at any of their hotspots throughout the area.

**Commercial Hotspots:** access will be for 12 hours at a time. At the end of that time, the user can immediately log back into the hotspot and continue use.

**Residential Hotspots:** access will be limited to 1-hour one time use.



Please visit <https://wifi.xfinity.com/> to find a hotspot and learn more.

Look for the network called: **xfinitywifi**. You will only be required to provide your zip code. Make sure you use **ONLY** the hotspots listed on the website.

# LOW COST INTERNET OPTIONS

The following companies are providing free and low cost internet options in response to COVID-19 and remote learning.

Comcast Internet Essentials: <https://www.internetessentials.com/>

ATT: <https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>

Spectrum/Charter: <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-to-offer-free-access-to-spectrum-broadband-and-wifi-for-60-days-for-new-K12-and-college-student-households-and-more>

Verizon: <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/update-verizon-serve-customers-covid-19>

Lifeline: <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/do-i-qualify/>

# WPS PROVIDED HOTSPOTS

The Winchendon Public Schools has received a Remote Learning Technology Essentials Grant from the State of Massachusetts to ensure students have internet access for the 2020-2021 school year. With this grant we have a limited number of internet hot spots available for student remote learning use. Provided hot spots will be limited in monthly allowable use and internet access will be filtered according to WPS school network policies and federal law. Devices should be used for educational purposes only.

Please note, a hot spot is more of an “emergency device.” If your residence does not have the infrastructure for using an internet services provider connection, and/or you are unable to obtain such a connection, we can provide a hot spot. Please also keep in mind that these hot spots are based on the Verizon cellular network, if you do not have coverage in your area the device may not work for you.

For families who have internet service, but are concerned about load, we strongly encourage optimizing your existing Wi-Fi options, as suggested earlier in the document or by contacting your ISP, before you consider a hot spot. Likely your connection, no matter the speed, is more rapid than a mobile hotspot. Additionally, running multiple Wi-Fi networks in your home may cause more interference than assistance in solving connectivity issues.

If you would like still to request a hot spot device please fill out the following form:

<https://forms.gle/jA4JzdnkLK1PPrpj8>