



**Carol and Frank Biondi Education Center  
Biondi Elementary, Middle and High Schools**

**Reopening School Plan**

**2020-2021**

**Revised September 4, 2020**

**Revised December 21, 2020**

**Dr. Angela White  
Superintendent of Schools**

**Mr. Roland Lewis, Elementary School Principal  
Ms. Marya Baker, Middle and High School Principal  
Mr. Michael Greene, Middle and High School Assistant Principal**

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# **REOPENING SCHOOL PLAN**

## **Biondi Elementary, Middle, and High Schools**

### **Introduction**

Our primary goal is to ensure that students, faculty, and staff are safe at school and are not unknowingly transmitting the COVID-19 virus. This document provides a roadmap for navigating steps towards the reopening of the Carol and Frank Biondi Education Center schools and includes the most current guidance from the New York State Education Department Reopening Guidance, Centers for Disease Control, Capital Region BOCES, NYS Department of Health, and American Federation of Teachers.

It is our expectation that this plan may evolve and be modified as updated public health guidance becomes available.

### **Communications**

#### **Stakeholder Group**

The following stakeholders participated in reviewing the Biondi Reopening Plan:

Dr. Angela White, Superintendent of Schools  
Mrs. Marya Baker, Biondi MS/HS Principal  
Mr. Roland Lewis, Biondi Elementary Principal  
Mr. Michael Greene, Biondi MS/HS Assistant Principal  
Dr. Jennifer D'Agostino, Director of Clinical Services  
Ms. Carmen Rodriguez, Food Services Manager  
Dr. Festus Agbonlahor, CDOS Supervisor  
Mr. James Carlos, HS Teacher  
Ms. Tonya Brown, Supervisor of Health Services  
Mr. Mitch Edwards, Supervisor of General Services and Maintenance  
Ms. Flora Garcia, Elementary School Teacher  
Ms. Alyssa Bangel, Occupational Therapist  
Ms. Demetria Thomas, Teaching Assistant  
Ms. Joanne Dallaco, Administrative Assistant to the Principal

Safety Coordinator – Roland Lewis and Marya Baker  
Resource Coordinator – Joanne Dallaco and Haydee Camacho

#### **Staff Communication**

The Biondi Reopening Plan was shared with all staff during an informational meeting. This provided an opportunity for staff to provide feedback, make recommendations, and voice concerns. The finalized plan will be emailed to all staff and reviewed prior to the first day of school.

## **Parent Communication**

The Biondi Reopening Plan was shared with all parents during several informational Town Hall Zoom meetings. This provided an opportunity for parents to provide feedback, make recommendations, and voice concerns.

The Reopening Plan will also be translated into Spanish, emailed, and mailed to all parents. It will also be placed on the school's webpage. Weekly phone blasts or emails will be sent out to families reminding them of daily screening requirements. We will ensure that all families have a way to notify us even if they cannot access internet /phone/ speak English/ remember the protocol.

Training parents how to properly screen will be provided– we will provide a video and written instructions on how to monitor and identify signs and symptoms of COVID –19. We will send out these reminders weekly to families, so they continue to monitor and screen their child every day prior to sending them to school and upon their return.

Daily, parents will be instructed to screen information to determine whether their child has:

- knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
- tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
- has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0° F °F in the past 14 days; and/or
- has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

Parents will be instructed to keep their child at home if there is a positive response to any of the screening information and to report this information to the school.

In compliance with NYSED requirements, the finalized plan will be placed on the school's website for public review.

## **CSE Communication**

To ensure collaboration between the committees on special education (CSE) and the Biondi Schools, the Reopening Plan will be provided via email. This will ensure that there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

## **IEP Implementation**

Until schools return to normal operating conditions, the same flexibility with respect to IEP implementation for delivery of services during school closures due to the COVID-19 outbreak continues to apply to the programs and services whether delivered in-person and/or remotely (e.g., flexibility with respect to the mode and/or manner; group or individual sessions; specific group size for related services, frequency, duration and location of related services, and special class size ratio etc.).

## **Provision of Services**

Consistent with previously issued Office of Special Education (OSE) guidance, the Biondi Schools will ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, each student will be provided the special education and related services identified in the student's IEP. During the 2020-21 school year, due to the health and safety requirements that must be in place when schools resume, we realize that we may not be able to provide all services in the same mode and/or manner they are typically provided. Working collaboratively, the administration, teachers and clinicians will need to determine what methods of delivery of services will be utilized to deliver special education programs and services to meet the needs of students as we plan for various types of instructional models including in-person and remote learning. When providing remote services, the Biondi schools will continue to use the information included in OSE's March 27, 2020 and April 27, 2020 guidance documents.

## **Progress Monitoring**

Teachers and service providers will continue to collect data, whether in-person or remotely, and use these data to monitor each student's progress toward the annual goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of the student's special education services. Determining student progress is necessary for understanding the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, and for determining whether, and to what extent, the school closures may have disrupted the student's learning. Reports of progress to parents will be made via telephone or other electronic means if progress reporting procedures specified in the student's IEP cannot be met with reasonable efforts.

## **School Schedules**

As schools reopen and considerations are being made to meet the requirements of social distancing, the following options will be implemented in the Biondi Elementary, Middle and High Schools. All schools will provide remote instruction September 10 – 18, 2020. The following will be implemented on September 21, 2020.

### **Groups A and B -Alternating Weeks: High School: Grades 10-12**

Half the student population will report to school for five days each week, while the remaining second half of the school population participates in remote learning at home. The student population will alternate between each week. All staff will report to work daily. Students will be provided with remote instruction and assignments to support their learning on the days in which they do not report to school.

### **Group C – Daily In Person Instruction: Elementary, All Residential, Middle, and Lower Secondary students**

Elementary students (grades K-6) will participate in face to face school instruction and attend daily. All Residential students, Middle School students in grades 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> and High School students in grades 9<sup>th</sup> will start face to face school daily. All residential students will start face to face school instruction and attend daily. All staff will report to school daily.

## **Group D: Remote Instruction Only**

Students whose parents request remote instruction will receive synchronous and asynchronous instruction daily. All staff will report to school daily.

### **2020-2021 School Year COVID-19 Snow Day Pilot**

As part of the Department's ongoing efforts to provide districts with flexibility in meeting local needs during the pandemic, the Department is establishing a one-year pilot to enable school districts, at district option, and consistent with each district's re-opening educational plan, to pivot to remote instruction to provide continuity of instruction on what would otherwise be a day of school closure due to a snow emergency.

This pilot is in effect for the 2020-21 school year, after which the Department will review the outcome of the pilot in determining whether to continue this flexibility in subsequent school years.

**For the first Snow Day called, that Snow Day will be a day without instruction for students. Staff will not work remotely, and children will not receive remote instruction.**

**For all subsequent Snow Days this school year, the pilot program set forth below (and as explained in our responses to the Union's information requests) will be put in place. Staff will work remotely, and children will receive remote instruction.**

#### **Classrooms**

- All student desks and other seat places will be rearranged to at least six feet apart to increase the space between students. They will all face in one direction.
  - Use visual aids (painter's tape) to illustrate the appropriate spacing.
  - Remove non-essential items and furniture/equipment to maximize space.
- Classes will be modified where students will remain in their classroom and the teachers will be rotated. This will limit the movement of students in the hallways during the change of classes.
- Hold classes outside when possible and students are spread out to maintain social distancing policy.
- Sharing of community supplies will be avoided when possible (i.e. scissors, crayons, etc.). All supplies should be placed in individual cubbies, storage bags or containers and labeled with the child's name.
- In the MS/HS only Backpacks will be permitted. Lockers will not be utilized.
- In MS/HS notebooks or loose-leaf will not be turned in. All classwork and assignments will be submitted electronically in Google Classroom.
- Nonessential personal property should not be brought to school.

- Adequate supplies will be provided to minimize the sharing of high-touched materials to the extent possible (i.e. art supplies, equipment assigned to a single child) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Each child's belongings will be separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas and taken home each day and cleaned, if possible
- Soft seating and vinyl furniture will be sanitized and cleaned daily.
- Related Services will be provided in individual and small groups, to students from the same classroom.

### **Hallways, Playgrounds and Other Considerations**

- Hallway travel in specific directions will be designated and marked by signs on the floor and wall
- Hallway movement will be restricted, and children will be properly spaced out when they are in the hallway.
- Reduced number of classes will be permitted outdoors during recess.
- Children will wash hands before and after outdoor recess.
- Field trips, school-wide parent meetings and other large gatherings will be cancelled based on state guidance.

### **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures**

- Multiple entry points for students to arrive and for dismissal will be assigned. There will be multiple supervised holding areas for students to safely wait for school to start when they arrive on the bus. This will prevent the funneling of all children through the same entry or congregating in one space. Classes will be dismissed one at a time.
  - If multiple entry points are not feasible, arrival and dismissal times will be staggered to avoid bottlenecks.
- Pen and paper sign-in/sign-out sheets will be eliminated. A single school staff member will be assigned to be responsible for signing children in and out (i.e. school secretary).
- Hands-free sanitizer stands will be installed near all entry doors and other high-traffic areas. Current regulations for hand sanitizer for children in school will be followed.

### **School Visitors/ Vendors/ Contractors/ Guests**

- In advance of scheduled visits, interviews or on-site meetings, every effort will be made to communicate the requirement for temperature screenings, face coverings and our guidelines for social distancing prior to entering Rising Ground facilities.
- Information how to inform visitors of this protocol will be made at the program/site level. Signage will be posted informing visitors of the expectations as highlighted below at reception desks and front entrances of our office and center-based sites. Masks and other supplies will be made available at the reception desks at each site.
- Unscheduled/unannounced nonessential visitors will be limited. If approved to enter the school, they will be required to adhere to all safety guidelines as listed in this document.
- Failure to comply with the guidelines listed below will restrict a visitor's entry into the school

### **Health and Safety**

Teaching teams will maintain a daily checklist of safety/health supplies needed in the classroom and other staff will keep daily checklists for their offices. Inventories will be given to the resource coordinator.

### **Healthy Hygiene Practices**

Teachers and all staff will encourage healthy habits:

- Reinforce handwashing routine, allow time for children to thoroughly wash their hands.
- Monitor bathrooms for middle and high school students throughout the day and develop a mechanism for reporting the exhaustion of soap or towels and a method to replace these items quickly.
- Develop a bathroom schedule for elementary school classes. Limit one student at a time in the bathrooms.
- Middle and high school bathrooms only serve one student at a time
- Have hand sanitizer and tissues and designated receptacles for disposal available for use by children and staff.
- Teach non-touch acknowledgments to show friendship

### **Hand Hygiene**

- All staff and students will be taught and reminded how to wash their hands properly and safely.
- Proper hand washing will be enforced and done throughout the day.
- Hand washing will be required for all people coming in from outside.
- When hand washing is not possible, hand sanitizer will be used.

- There will be hand sanitizer stations placed throughout the floors and in bottles of hand sanitizer will be in every classroom and replenished routinely.
- We will reduce the number of high-touch areas.

### **Respiratory Hygiene**

- All staff, students will be taught and reminded how to safely cough in a tissue or in the crook of your arm.
- All staff will teach and reinforce to children the importance of not touching their faces or other people's faces.

### **Temperature Screenings**

- All children will be screened with a contactless device upon arrival and before entering the school by assigned staff. Residential staff will take the daily temperature of the residential students before they come to school. Daily health temperature screening of children and authorized individuals (e.g., consultants, maintenance, contractors) with legitimate business needs to enter the school.
  - These health checks will be done safely and respectfully and with measures in place to ensure confidentiality as well as in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations. Confidentiality will be maintained.
  - Individuals who have a fever of 100.0° F or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted into the school building.
  - Parents will be encouraged to be on the alert for signs of sickness in their child and keep them home when they are sick.
  - The school will designate a specific place for staff to dispose of gloves and how to bag/discard them after use.
- Daily, all staff will be required to complete a screening questionnaire upon arrival before entering the classroom or his/her office. (Appendix A)
- Staff will be encouraged to stay home if they are sick or if their children/family members are sick.
- All visitors will be screened with a contactless device and be required to complete a questionnaire upon arrival before entering the facility.
- These health checks will be done safely and respectfully and with measures in place to ensure confidentiality as well as in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- Individuals who have a fever of 100.0° F or above or other signs of illness will not be admitted into the building/facility.

- The station will be cleaned/sanitized, as necessary. Sanitizing wipes/alcohol pads will be at the stations for cleaning as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Signage explaining the requirement for temperature screening will be posted on the outside doors of the buildings/offices as well as in the lobbies of the buildings.
- Demarcations will be placed on the floor to ensure proper social distancing while multiple visitors wait to be screened.

### **Face Coverings**

- All individuals on school and agency premises, including students and visitors, will wear a facemask or a cloth face covering while on school and agency property when social distancing cannot be maintained effectively in hallways, restrooms and in other congregating areas. Cloth face coverings are meant to stop the wearer from spreading respiratory droplets and to remind people not to touch their faces.
- Students, parents/guardians, and staff will be instructed on the proper way to wear face coverings, wash their hands before putting on and after removing their face covering, and the proper way to discard disposable face coverings.
- Masks will be provided to visitors that do not have one when they arrive at the sites.
- Mask breaks will be planned by the teacher and the students throughout the day when it is safe to do so.
- All staff will be provided with face shields and gloves. When the face shield is worn it must be used with the face mask.
- Teachers will teach and reinforce the proper use of face covering. Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially young children and students with disabilities) to wear in all-day settings such as school. As per CDC guidance, face coverings should not be placed on:
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
  - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.

### **Social Distancing**

- All Staff, Visitors and students will be required to adhere to the following protocols for social distancing (as applicable) which may include: All staff, visitors and students will be required
  - to stay a minimum of 6 feet from others at all times. This requirement may be adjusted where the six feet separation is not possible.
  - There will be directional flows in the hallways and common areas to avoid physical contact while walking through the school.

## **Facilities**

### **Space utilization**

All available office space and classrooms will be used as extensions of the classrooms to provide additional social distancing opportunities for students during instruction as well as clinical sessions

- We will be using the outside space we have available for outdoor classroom instruction.
- All Safety Drills – four lockdown drills – eight evacuation drills – will be conducted on a staggered schedule to ensure that students attending on alternating weeks will participate. During each drill students and staff will wear face masks and will be socially distanced. We will use multiple exits during our drills, so students have less contact. Our doors are automatically released during a drill

### **Ventilation**

- Working with the custodial staff, ventilation and filtration systems will be monitored to ensure proper operation and the control of airborne exposure to COVID-19.
- General Services will keep air vents clean, open, and unblocked. They will also keep the office temperature regulated to control humidity and keep allergens under control.
- Circulation of outdoor air will be increased as much as possible by opening windows and doors before the arrival and after dismissal of the children. Window and doors will not be open if they pose a safety or health risk to the children of the school (i.e. all doors to the school building, classroom doors).
- Schedule for cleaning all vents will be maintained.

### **Signage**

- Floors will have directional signage to remind staff and students which way to walk in hallways.
- Elevator use will be single occupant only and only for those with medical clearance. In the MS/HS, staff and students cannot ride the elevator at the same time for any reason.

## **Cleaning/Disinfecting Protocols**

- A deep cleaning and/or electrostatic cleaning of the entire school will be done prior to the opening of school.
- Staff will wear disposable gloves when cleaning and/or disinfecting.
  - Rising Ground will ensure an adequate supply of disposable gloves will be available for staff use.
- The drinking fountains will be flushed to clear out any standing water. We will have water available for every class with disposable cups. Water filtration systems are already in place in certain common areas.

- Teachers and Staff will be trained on the proper disinfecting techniques, cleanings will be scheduled and logged, and proper, safe disinfectants will be made available in all common spaces.
- Clutter-free spaces in classrooms, hallways, offices will be maintained.
- Surfaces will be cleaned using soap and water or another detergent. Classroom staff will regularly clean frequently touched surfaces (i.e. door handles, sink handles) throughout the day.
- Areas used by a sick individual/child will be closed off and not used before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Use of shared objects (i.e. art supplies, toys, puzzles, games) will be limited when possible or cleaned between use.
- A schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection will be implemented.
- Programs that have access to utilize the washing machine in the school will ensure that laundered items (i.e. aprons) will be laundered according to the manufacturer's instructions. Disposable gloves will be worn when handling dirty laundry. Gloves will be properly removed, and hands washed after laundering. The Nylon bags used during laundering will be cleaned according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Cleaning products will not be used near children, and staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Anti-microbial wraps for door handles will be used for doors that are to remain closed (i.e. bathrooms).
- Cleaning logs completed by the custodians will be submitted to the building Principals daily.
- Cleaning plans used by the cleaning crew will include tech, high-touch surfaces, classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and large eating spaces.

### **Disinfecting**

- The use of NYS DEC and EPA registered household disinfectants will be used. Staff will be instructed to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
  - Rising Ground will provide an adequate supply of disinfectant for use.
- Household bleach solutions will be diluted to use, if appropriate, for disinfecting surface areas. The label will be checked to determine if solution is intended for disinfection and ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
- Soft surfaces will be cleaned with soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.

- Working with the custodian, staff will be informed of those surfaces that should be cleaned with soap/water vs. those that should be disinfected and when a circumstance calls for soap versus disinfectant (e.g., a child vomits – disinfect.)

## **Isolation Protocol**

- An “Isolation Coordinator” (IC) will be selected and responsible for implementing the isolation protocol. A designee will also be selected, in the event the IC is absent/not on premises.
  - The IC and designee will be trained on protocol.
  - The IC and designee will be required to wear all PPE while in the isolation room.
- Sick staff members or children will not return until they have met CDC’s criteria to discontinue home isolation.

## **Isolate and Transport those who are Sick**

- An isolation room or area will be designated to separate anyone who has COVID-19 and/or PMIS/MIS-C symptoms. The room will be as close as possible to the entrance of the building to minimize potential exposure throughout the building. The Rising Ground Nurse supervisor will be contacted for direction and guidance.
- Students and staff with symptoms of illness will be sent to the Nurse’s office. She will be able to effectively assess whether individuals have chronic conditions such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal conditions, which may present the same symptoms as COVID-19, but are neither contagious nor pose a public health threat.
- Staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be separated immediately and will be taken to the Isolation Room. Parents of sick children will be contacted immediately to pick up child from school. Staff who are sick will be directed to go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe the symptoms are. The Nurse, in conjunction with the Medical Director, will provide a written protocol for directing families to the most appropriate venue to enhance consistent referrals based on known symptoms. The protocol will include the circumstances under which an ambulance should be called.
- If the school nurse is not available, the building administrators will have the student who has a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 be sent to the isolation room and the parent will be contacted to pick up his/her child. Administrators will work collaboratively with the school nurse to determine if additional staff is needed to assist with non-nursing tasks such as:
  - Student supervision.
  - Telephone calls, text, or emails to parent/guardians; and
  - Assistance with completing any required paperwork other than nursing documentation.

- Staff and families will be instructed to notify school officials if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case or are told to self-isolate due to an exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 infected individual.
- If an ambulance is called, they will be alerted that the person may have COVID-19 symptoms.
- All areas used by the sick individual will be closed off and not used until after the areas are sanitized and disinfected.
- All persons in contact with the sick individual shall be noted in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.
- Custodian staff will wait at least 24 hours or as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting. In coordination with General Services, the scheduling of electrostatic cleaning to kill and prevent further transmission of COVID-19 will take place when there are known or suspected cases in the school building.
- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators will notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **A student with a confirmed Positive case of COVID-19 can return to school when:**
  - He or she has had no fever for at least three (3) days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; AND
  - Any respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) have improved; AND
  - At least ten (10) days have passed since the symptoms began.

### **Contact Tracing**

Contact Tracing for staff is being conducted by the Westchester County Department of Health and Human Resources department of Rising Ground. Contact Tracing for students is being conducted by the Westchester County Department of Health.

### **Food Service and Nutrition**

- Breakfast and Lunch will be individually packaged for distribution.
- Students in grades K-6 will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Students in grades 7-9 will be served lunch in the cafeteria, in compliance with state guideline for social distancing.

- Students in grades 10-12 will be served lunch in the auditorium, in compliance with state guideline for social distancing.
- Immediate and appropriate cleaning of tables and surfaces after breakfast and lunch will be conducted by cafeteria staff.
- Sharing of food and utensils will be prohibited.
- Disposable food service items (i.e. utensils, dishes) will be used.
- All Food Safety guidelines will be followed in transporting food outside of the cafeteria to students who have food allergies
- Students who learn remotely will have access to food resources from the district and community providers for breakfast and lunch.

## **Transportation**

Although we do not control the district transportation plan, we are continuing to work closely with them and communicating consistently to coordinate a smooth and safe transportation transition for our students. We are in constant contact with the drivers and the matrons as well as the district transportation representatives.

## **Socio-emotional learning and MTSS**

At the Biondi Education Center, we remain committed to supporting the social-emotional learning of our students. Our dynamic population of students requires individuals and global supports to facilitate the right mindset for learning. All of our students have individualized education plans which outline the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of each student. In addition to following the student's individualized plan, the Biondi Education Center offers the following global social, emotional and positive behavioral supports:

- Team of mental health clinicians, speech-language pathologists, and occupational therapists available to meet as needed in addition to scheduled sessions.
- Preventative emotional check-ins with students which include regular communication and collaboration with clinical team and teachers, TAs, nurse, administrators, 1-1s and parents/guardians and outside providers
- Therapeutic crisis intervention and de-escalation
- Therapy dogs to provide emotional support (virtual and in-person)
- Equine-assisted psychotherapy and learning sessions (virtual and in-person)

## Attendance

The Biondi Education Center recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Biondi Schools expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences and tardiness, encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student absences and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance. During our hybrid instruction, remote instruction attendance will be maintained through students logging into Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom meeting, phone calls, or text messaging.

- At the start of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be recorded in PowerSchool and provided to the Attendance Coordinator, who is responsible for attendance documentation and reviewed. It is expected that teachers will maintain their class record-keeping relative to attendance.
- The nature of an excused (e.g. doctor's appointment, court visits, home visits for residential students) or unexcused (work, babysitting, vacation, college visits) absence or tardy and early departures shall be coded on a student's record in PowerSchool. Each homeroom teacher and/or clinician shall document all contacts with a student and her/his parent/guardian regarding the student's attendance, including a summary of all intervention efforts.
  - Daily Auto calls will be made to parents informing them of their child's absence.
  - Daily communication (telephone calls, texts, and/or email) to parents of absent students will be made by the classroom teacher.
  - After three (3) consecutive days of absences, the classroom teacher will inform the student's clinician. The clinician will then contact the student's parent on the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) consecutive day of being absent.
  - The five-day absence letter will be sent from the school to the parent and managers of the RTC cottages.
  - The Request for Determination Regarding Students with Status/Notification Regarding Student Absence without Legal Excuse (RDNA) letter will be submitted to the home district of students who have five (5) consecutive days of absences.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made. Notice of such a change will be made available to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- The building administrators will meet regularly with appropriate staff to analyze data on student absences and tardiness to identify patterns. Such data shall be used to identify common barriers to attendance, prioritize resources for intervention, and monitor progress over time.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent or tardy.

## **Technology and Connectivity**

### **In School Instruction**

- Every student has access to a device and Wi-Fi connection in school during school hours. The student will always use the same device unless a replacement is needed.
- E-Rate funding will be explored to build capacity in the wireless network to handle a dramatically increased use of the network.
- GoGuardian will continued to be used to monitor the usage of devices to ensure they are used for instruction purposes and the devices cannot be used to access inappropriate materials.
- The devices are stored in a charging cabinet, so they are fully charged when student needs the device.
- When devices are picked up by the students, a teaching team member will sanitize the device by UV wand for the time specified by the device's instructions.
- When the device is returned, and before its connected to the charger, the device will be sanitized by a teaching team member by UV wand for the time specified by the device's instructions.

### **Remote Instruction and assignments to be completed at home**

- Teachers and Clinicians are in daily contact with students via google classroom postings, assignments, and mandated counseling sessions. When a student, parent or social services agency identifies to a teaching team member or clinician that a student needs their own device or robust internet access to connect to school, the clinician will contact the funding school district or NYC Administration for Children's Services to obtain a device with wireless internet access so remote instruction can be completed at the student's residence.
- Teachers, clinicians, OT, and speech teachers were surveyed during the spring for access to a device and internet access. Those professional staff members who identified a need for a device were given a device to be used for remote instruction.

### **Professional Development**

- At least once a month, a technology consultant provides professional development on how to use the G-Suite for Education to provide synchronous and asynchronous distance instruction and design activities specific to each grade or content area. The consultant meets with individual and small groups of teachers and clinicians for professional development tailored to the needs their students. A YouTube library of tech tutorials accessible to teachers, clinicians, students, and parents.

- G-Suite was selected initially for its ease of use for teachers and students. Teachers received professional development on G-Suite for the past and several incorporated the learning management system into their programs. These instructional technology leaders assist their colleagues who have technical and instructional questions about G-Suite.

All the recommended privacy settings are enabled in G-Suite for Education to protect students' privacy.

## **Teaching and Learning During Remote Instruction**

In continued adherence to federal, State, and City health guidelines and federal and state laws regarding educating students with disabilities, we are continuing our Summer School remote learning plan for students receiving remote instruction during the regular school year. Since quality remote learning includes both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, the remote instructional model will include a mix of both as defined in this document. Additionally, this section outlines expectations about the instructional models we will use during remote instruction.

All Staff will be required to report to work daily during any period of fully remote instruction. Following CDC guidelines for social distancing, teachers and teaching assistants will conduct synchronous and asynchronous instruction from their classrooms. This will provide them with access to required instructional materials, newly enhanced technology, mutual instructional support, in-person and real-time guidance and support from their principals, and continuation of professional development.

### **In-person Instruction for Residential Students during any period of Full Remote**

Specific Middle/High School Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Clinicians, and Residential Students' 1:1 TAs will be required to provide daily in-person instruction to Residential Students in available program spaces of the RTC and the Administration Building. This instruction will be provided in accordance with CDC guidelines for social distancing and will help ensure educational equity for our residential students.

### **What is Synchronous Instruction?**

As part of remote instruction, synchronous instruction will occur daily. Synchronous instruction is defined as some live interaction between the teacher and a student or students each day at a scheduled time at the discretion of the teacher, communicated in advance to parents and students and in consultation with the site supervisor.

- Daily synchronous instruction can be done with the whole class, in small groups, or with individual students, as determined by the teacher.
- The teacher is responsible for determining the appropriate form of daily synchronous instruction, which may include but is not limited to the following live approaches using Google Meet, Zoom, and phone conferences, combined with real time discussion boards:
  - Daily social and emotional wellness check-ins with students
  - schoolwork progress check-ins with students

- Conferences with students or families
- In the case of live, whole class, small group and/or individualized live instruction, the teacher must establish the time for engagement

### **What is Asynchronous Instruction?**

Asynchronous instruction will occur daily and serve as a complement to daily synchronous instruction. For instance, while some students are engaged in synchronous instruction, others may be engaged in asynchronous instruction and learning. Asynchronous learning means instruction and learning that do not occur at the same time for all students. This enables students to work at their own pace and allows for students to learn the same material at different times independently.

- Asynchronous instruction consists of daily tasks or assignments for students to work at their own pace as determined by the teacher and informed by student data.
- The teacher is responsible for determining the appropriate form of daily asynchronous instruction, which may include but is not limited to the following approaches:
  - Activities, assignments, or tasks
  - Projects
  - Discussion on Google Classroom
  - Email communication
  - Feedback on student learning

Teachers will create a work-day schedule in consultation with the building administration that includes but is not limited to:

- Synchronous whole and small group instruction and individualized student support
- Planning for asynchronous self-paced student activities, tasks, and assignments
- Monitoring student engagement and completion of asynchronous, self-paced activities
- Assessing student work and providing feedback to students
- Individualized or small group check-ins to support work progress
- Supporting students and families with navigating remote learning instructional materials and platforms
- Other duties related to remote learning

Since synchronous instruction may occur whole group, small group or with individual students, not every student will receive the same amount of synchronous instruction each day. The amount of synchronous instruction each student will receive will vary based upon academic and social emotional needs as outlined by the student's IEP.

In addition to the above, teachers will:

- Review student IEP goals participate in IEP meetings, and progress monitoring with students and parents accordingly. Provide progress notes and documentation mandated by the IEP.
- Work in coordination with other teachers, related service providers, and parents to develop and implement student programs and services
- Provide direction and guidance to teaching assistants in providing instructional support to students

### **Clinician’s workday:**

Clinicians will create a work-day schedule in consultation with the Director of Clinical Services that include but are not limited to:

- Synchronous individual and small group teletherapy and individualized student support
- Planning for asynchronous tasks
- Daily social and emotional wellness check-ins with students
- Individualized or small group check-ins to support work progress
- Participation in IEP meetings and documentation related to progress notes, FBA/BIPS and IEP mandates
- Other duties related to teletherapy

### **Remote Instruction**

#### **Grades 1-8**

The following synchronous activities will occur daily:

- Instruction in ELA: 45 minutes per day of whole and small group instruction and individualized student support (iReady, \*Reading Street, \*Epic, Teacher Made Materials)
- Instruction in Math: 45 minutes per day of whole and small group instruction and individualized student support (iReady, \*Happy Numbers, Teacher Made Materials)
- Other remote learning duties (social and emotional wellness or work progress check-ins, conferences with families, office hours): 20-30 minutes per day

\*Grades 1-6

#### **Grades 9-12**

The following synchronous activities will occur daily for the specified times:

- Total instruction across sections/courses: 45 minutes per day of whole and small group instruction and individualized student support
- Total other remote learning duties (work progress check-ins, conferences with students, etc.): 30-50 minutes per day

## **Career and Technical Education**

We work in close partnership with Bronx Community College and will follow their guidelines regarding in-person sessions for our security, HVAC, plumbing and office assistant programs. Our students will attend virtual synchronous sessions at the start of the school year. We have a salon in our school for our barbering and cosmetology program. We will utilize plastic barriers and all safety procedures as a regular salon would utilize to maintain minimal contact and safe spacing.

## **Athletics**

We will follow the guidelines of the NYSPHSAA regarding Fall sports

- Delay fall sports start date until Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup>
- No regional and state championships
- Waive seven-day practice rule

## **Staffing/Human Resources**

Our staffing ratio remains 12:1:1 and all staff are properly certified to meet the needs of our students.

## **PPE distribution**

- All staff will be required to wear face covering while on school and agency property when not able to social distance or under specific considerations. Rising Ground will be providing bandanas to all employees to wear as face cloth masks, but employees can wear their own. Masks should be consistently and properly worn, properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of as applicable to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment. Even while wearing your face mask, you should continue to keep about six feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for physical distancing. You are responsible for keeping your mask clean.
- As a precautionary measure, as recommended by the CDC to reduce the spread of COVID-19, all employees reporting to work will be asked to take their body temperature prior to coming to work. If your temperature is 100.0° F or over please call your supervisor and let them know you need to return home. Do not go to your classroom/office prior to returning home. Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting all of us in the workplace.
- Contagion Risk: Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting all of us in the workplace. If any employee suspects possible exposure to the coronavirus, we require that
  - you do not come to the office
  - immediately report this to Human Resources following the procedure that has been established.
- You present a contagion risk if:

- You tested positive for coronavirus in the preceding 2 weeks
  - You have had COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell in the last 24 hours
  - You have a temperature exceeding 100.0° F degrees Fahrenheit
- If you start feeling sick or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms while in the school/ your office, inform your supervisor and immediately leave the school and go home, and report any COVID-19 symptoms to Human Resources.
  - **An employee can return to work when:**
    - He or she has had no fever for at least three (3) days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; AND
    - Any respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath) have improved; AND
    - At least ten (10) days have passed since the symptoms began.
  - Attendance expectations will be communicated to leadership and staff.
  - Staff will receive necessary training on updated protocols, policies, and guidelines. After each training, staff will be required to sign-off on expected behavior related to health and safety.
  - Staff will have access to adequate and appropriate PPE (i.e. gloves, face shield, etc.) and will have received trainings on expectations of use and proper disposal.
  - Mental health resources will be easily accessible and available to all staff.
  - Lunch times will be staggered, if necessary, for all staff to ensure social distancing in the faculty room. (i.e. A distance seating arrangement in the faculty room will be created).
  - Demarcations will be placed on floor near timeclocks for staff while waiting access to clock in or out. Additional time clocks will be installed. Hands-free hand sanitizer will be placed adjacent to time clocks with signage instructing staff to use hand sanitizer after clock in/out.
  - Sneeze guards will be provided to office staff in areas where it is difficult for them to remain at least 6 feet apart.
  - Staff will be encouraged to ensure clean desk protocols to ensure proper cleaning.

#### **Distribution of PPEs**

- The attached document should be reviewed to familiarize yourself with items that the organization will be providing for your safety as well as how to properly use them along with the appropriate maintenance and/or disposal of each item.

## **In-Person Instruction during Remote Only**

### **Plan for Safety of Environment:**

- Daily Instruction will take place in the Available Program Spaces of the RTC and the Administration Building
- Social Distance Markers will be set up to ensure six feet of separation between students
- Hand Sanitizer, Disinfectant wipes and Disinfectant Spray will be available in each room.
- Each of the program spaces will be electrostatically cleaned three times per week (Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday) to ensure spaces are free from the virus.
- The program spaces will be wiped down with CDC approved disinfectant after each use.
- Anti-Microbial Stickers will be placed on high touch areas such as doorknobs, toilet handles.
- A staff member from the cleaning company (Servco) will complete rounds every 30 minutes to disinfect high touch areas within the main building
- When possible, instruction will take place outside under tents that have been rented or in our outdoor amphitheater.

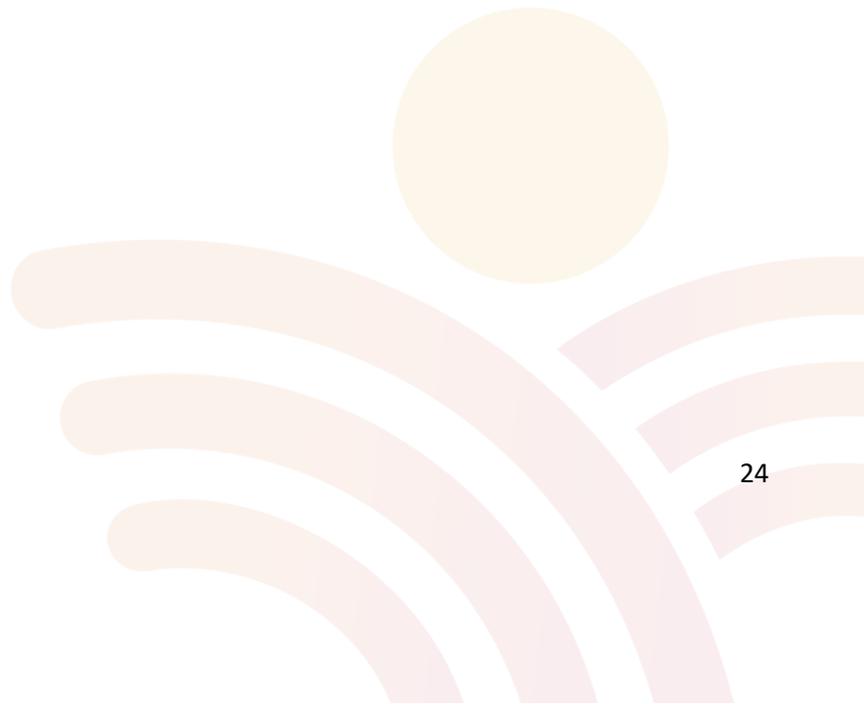
### **Plan for Safety of Individuals:**

- Students from each cottage will be moved in “cohorts” (only residents from one cottage in each individual space) to limit the potential of transmission and to ensure proper contact tracing as per Rising Ground protocol
- Social Distance Markers will be set up to ensure six feet of separation between individuals
- Whenever possible, instruction will take place outside.
- All individuals (staff and residents) will be provided with a mask
- Extra masks will be available in the case of a lost, missing, or unusable mask
- Each resident will be provided with his or her own electronic device (iPad, laptop or Chromebook) that they will use for instruction
- Students will wear their school uniform shirts to school or program each day and will be laundered by staff each night.

### **Training Topics for Staff**

- COVID-19 disease symptoms
- COVID-19 transmission
- Maintaining strong immune systems
- Basic safety practices, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, social distancing
- Self-monitoring, employee health checks
- Rising Ground responsibilities
- Employee responsibilities
- Transfer of hand sanitizer to smaller containers
- Use of face masks (donning/doffing) (cloth masks vs. disposable masks)

- Use of gloves (particularly removal)
- PPE
  - OSHA requirements
  - Reuse (sanitizing, cleaning)
  - Disposal
- Cleaning and disinfecting
- Training for temperature screeners and Isolation Coordinator
- Trauma training and SEL training
- Culturally responsive school practices
- Implicit Bias training
- Coping and resilience skills for parents, students, and staff



# RESOURCES

## New York State Education Department

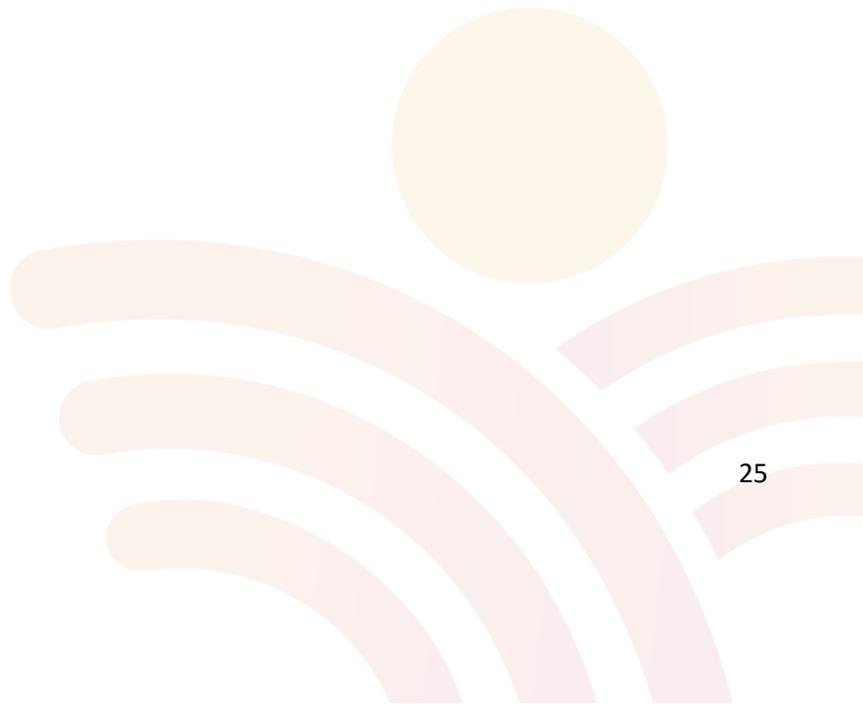
- Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s School: Reopening Guidance  
[NYSED reopening guidance](#)

## New York State Department of Health

- Interim Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19  
<https://sunypoly.edu/sites/default/files/health-alerts/COVID-19-School-Cleaning-Guidance-FINAL.PDF>

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Stress and Coping  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>



## APPENDIX A -Revised November 4, 2020



### COVID-19 SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

As the Covid-19 pandemic is still present, we continue to follow CDC and DOH guidance in order to prevent the spread of the virus and to reduce the potential risk of exposure in our employees and Persons Supported. For this reason, anyone coming into the program/office space must complete and submit this questionnaire prior to initiating his/her/their work. You are encouraged to take your temperature at home prior to coming to work. If you prefer to take your temperature at work, we encourage you to use the contactless thermometer provided. If the answer to any of the questions below is YES, and/or your temperature is above 100.0° F, we ask you to please contact your supervisor and immediately leave the office/premises and go home.

The information on this form will be maintained as confidential. Any questions should be directed to Human Resources.

1	<p>Are you currently experiencing, or have you experienced in the past 24 hours, any of the following symptoms?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Fever (100.0° F or greater as measured by an thermometer)</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Cough</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> New loss of taste or smell</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Chills</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Head or muscle aches</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting</p>
2	<p>In the past 14 days, have you sustained contact to anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 or who has or had symptoms? Sustained contact means a contact of 15 minutes or more without social distancing of 6 feet or more and/or without wearing PPE.</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
3	<p>In the past 14 days, have you tested positive for COVID-19?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
4.	<p>Have you traveled internationally or spent more than 24 hours, in the past 5 days, in a state that is not contiguous with New York State? The states that are contiguous with NY State are New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont. (International travel or travel of more than 24 hours to a state other than these requires COVID testing and a period of quarantine.)</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

\*Please note that this questionnaire will be updated as the CDC and DOH guidance on COVID-19 continues to change.

**I hereby certify that the responses provided above are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

### Reasonable Accommodations for Staff

The School will document employee concerns/requests and will abide by the ADA and other relevant federal, state, and local laws. Staff with an underlying medical condition should reach out to Human Resources to request a reasonable accommodation. These determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

### School Decision Tree

In preparation for and outbreak of COVID-19 in the schools, when a confirmed case has entered the school, the following procedures will be implemented:

#### √ **Coordinate with local health officials.**

Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, local health officials will be notified immediately. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for the schools.

#### √ **Dismiss students and staff according to local and state officials.**

This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This allows the local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

- Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., a single class, multiple classes) and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the school.
- During school dismissals, extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs, and parent meetings will be cancelled.
- Staff, students, and their families will be discouraged from gathering or socializing anywhere. This includes group childcare arrangements, as well as gathering at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

#### √ **Communicate with staff, parents, and students.**

Coordinate with local health officials to communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure.

- Communication to staff, parents, and staff will contain messages that will counter potential stigma and discrimination.
- Confidentiality of the student or staff member will be maintained as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

### √ **Clean and disinfect thoroughly.**

Areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 will be closed off and custodial staff will wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Outside doors and windows will be opened to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

- Cleaning staff will clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If surfaces are dirty, they will be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection the most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will be used.

### √ **Make decisions about extending the school dismissal.**

Temporarily dismissing the school is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities.

- During school dismissals (after cleaning and disinfection), schools will stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home.
  - Keeping facilities open:
    - a) allows teachers to develop and deliver lessons and materials remotely, thus maintaining continuity of teaching and learning; and
    - b) allows other staff members to continue to provide services and help with additional response efforts. Decisions on which, if any, staff should be allowed in the school should be made in collaboration with local health officials.
- School administrators will work in close collaboration and coordination with local health officials to make dismissal decisions. Schools are not expected to make decisions about dismissal or canceling events on their own. School dismissals may be extended if advised by local health officials. The nature of these actions (e.g., geographic scope, duration) may change as the local outbreak situation evolves.
- Administrators will seek guidance from local health officials to determine when students and staff should return to schools and what additional steps are needed for the school community. In addition, students and staff who are well but are taking care of or share a home with someone with a case of COVID-19 should follow instructions from local health officials to determine when to return to school.

### √ **Implement strategies to continue education and related supports for students.**

- **Ensure continuity of education**
  - Review continuity plans, including plans for the continuity of teaching and learning. Implement e-learning plans, including digital and distance learning options as feasible and appropriate.
  - Determine, in consultation with school district officials or other relevant state or local partners:
    - If a waiver is needed for state requirements of a minimum number of in-person instructional hours or school days (seat time) as a condition for funding.
- **Ensure continuity of meal programs.**

