

**Rising Ground Preschools  
Marion & George Ames Early Childhood Learning Center,  
Dr. Katharine Dodge Brownell School  
Children's Learning Center**

**Reopening School Plan**

**2021-2022**

**Revised September 4, 2020**

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**Dr. Angela White  
Superintendent of Schools  
Ms. Alzina Gilmore  
Vice President of Preschool  
Ms. Terri Lein, Ames Preschool Principal  
Ms. Vera Gregory, Brownell Preschool Principal  
Ms. Odette Stewart, CLC Preschool Principal**

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# **REOPENING SCHOOL PLAN**

## **Ames, Brownell, CLC Preschools**

### **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 Rising Ground Preschools 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 Preschools Reopening Plan:

Dr. Angela White, Superintendent of Schools  
Ms. Alzina Gilmore, Vice President of Preschool  
Ms. Terri Lein, Ames Preschool Principal  
Ms. Vera Gregory, Brownell Preschool Principal  
Ms. Odette Stewart, CLC Preschool Principal  
Ms. Karen Banks, Special Education Teacher, Brownell

Ms. Alissa Coley, Special Education Teacher, Ames  
Ms. Diana Santiago, Classroom Teacher, CLC

Safety Coordinator – Ames: Eliana Nunez; Daphne Carter(alternate)  
Brownell: Diana Sampayo  
CLC: Yamely Almonte

Resource Coordinator – Ames: Maria Lucio  
Brownell: Lauren Pabon  
CLC: Corine White

#### **Staff Communication**

The Preschool 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 Preschool Reopening Plan was shared with all parents during an informational meeting. This provided an opportunity for parents to provide feedback, make recommendations, and voice concerns.

The Reopening Plan will also be emailed and mailed to all parents. 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 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 preschool special education (CPSE) and the Ames, CLC, and Brownell Preschools, 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 Preschools 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.

### **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, all students are required to receive in-person instruction. The remote instruction option will not be offered.

### **2021 – 2022 School Year COVID-19 Remote Instruction Snow Day**

As part of the Department's ongoing efforts to provide districts with flexibility in meeting local needs during the pandemic, the Department is continuing to approve the remote instruction snow day, which is consistent with the Preschool' re-opening educational plan. The Preschools will pivot to remote instruction to provide continuity of instruction on what would otherwise be a day of school closure due to a snow emergency.

**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**

- Rearrange student desks and other seat places to at least three feet apart to increase the space between students.
- Break classes into smaller work groups when possible and rotate teachers and teaching assistants to each group instead of having students rotate to different groups.
- Hold classes outside when possible and encourage students to spread out.
- Encourage healthy habits:
  - Reinforce handwashing routine, allow time for children to thoroughly wash their hands.
  - Monitor bathrooms throughout the day and develop a mechanism for reporting the exhaustion of soap or towels and a method to replace these items quickly.
  - Teach coughing and sneezing etiquette.
  - Have hand sanitizer and tissues and designated receptacles for disposal available for use by children and staff.
  - Teach and reinforce to children on the importance of not touching their faces or other people's faces.
  - Teach non-touch acknowledgments to show friendship
- Sharing of community supplies will be avoided when possible (i.e., scissors, crayons, etc.). All supplies should be placed in individual storage bags and labeled with the child's name.
- 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 (by whom). This include toys, books, or games.

## **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.
- 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 at reception desks and front entrances of our office and SCHOOLS. Masks and other supplies will be made available at the reception desks at each site.
- 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.
- Develop a bathroom schedule for preschool school classes. Limit one-three students at a time in the bathrooms.

- 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. 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 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.



- 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 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 premises, including students, staff (regardless of vaccination status), and visitors, will wear a facemask while on school property when social distancing cannot be maintained effectively in hallways, restrooms and in other congregating areas.
- Students, parents/guardians, and staff will be instructed on the proper way to wear face masks, wash their hands before putting on and after removing their face masks.
- 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
- Teachers will teach and reinforce the proper use of face masks. Face masks 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 masks should not be placed on:
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious

- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face mask without assistance.

## **Social Distancing**

- All unvaccinated Staff and Visitors will be required to adhere to the following protocols for social distancing (as applicable) which may include: All staff and visitors will be required:
  - to stay a minimum of 3 feet from others at all times. This requirement may be adjusted where the three 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.
- All students and Staff 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 3 feet from others at all times.
  - 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

- All Safety Drills – four lockdown drills – eight evacuation drills – will be conducted. 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.

### **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.

## **Cleaning/Disinfecting Protocols**

- A deep cleaning and disinfecting 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.
- Each child's belongings will be separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas and taken home weekly and cleaned (i.e. sleeping blankets, etc.).
- Soft seating, cots, and vinyl furniture will be sanitized and cleaned daily.
- All dolls with fabric clothing and fabric dolls will be packed away and not provided to children.
- The water coolers 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
- 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.
- Schools that have access to provide laundry will ensure that laundered items (i.e., children's blankets) 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. Laundry basket will be cleaned and disinfected.

- 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.
- 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.
- Dilute household bleach solutions will be used, if appropriate for the surface. 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.

- 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. Working collaboratively with the Rising Ground 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.
- The building administrators will have the student who has a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 sent to the isolation room and the parent will be contacted to pick up his/her child. Administrators will 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 and students is being conducted by the Human Resources department of Rising Ground.

## **Food Service and Nutrition**

- Breakfast and Lunch will be individually Packaged for distribution. Students who learn remotely will have access to breakfast and lunch from the Preschool (Ames only) or the home district.
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- Immediate and appropriate cleaning of tables after breakfast and lunch will be conducted by classroom staff.
- Sharing of food and utensils will be prohibited.
- Disposable food service items (i.e., utensils, dishes) will be used.

## **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**

In our preschools, 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, each preschool offers the following global social, emotional and positive behavioral supports:

- Preventative and proactive emotional check-ins with students which include regular communication and collaboration with teachers, TAs, administrators, 1-1s and parents/guardians and outside providers.

- Therapeutic crisis intervention and de-escalation protocols will be implemented.

## **Attendance**

The Preschools recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Preschools 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.

- At the start of school day, all attendance information shall be recorded in PowerSchool and provided to the staff member 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) or unexcused absence or tardy and early departures shall be coded on a student's record in PowerSchool. Each classroom teacher 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 or phone 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.
- 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 classroom has access to a device and Wi-Fi connection in school during school hours. The student in each class will have the use of 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.
- The devices are stored in a charging cabinet, so they are fully charged when student needs the device.

- 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 during a Remote Instruction Snow Day**

- Teachers and related service providers are in daily contact with students via google classroom, Google Meet, and/or Zoom for assignments, and mandated related service sessions. When a student, parent or social services agency identifies to a teaching team member that a student needs their own device or robust internet access to connect to school, the building principal will contact NYC Department of Education to obtain a device with wireless internet access so remote instruction can be completed at the student's residence.
- Teachers, OT, and speech teachers were surveyed during the spring for access to a device and internet access.

### **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 for professional development tailored to the needs their students. A YouTube library of tech tutorials will be accessible to teachers, 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 a Remote Instruction Snow Day**

In continued adherence to federal, State, and City health guidelines and federal and state laws regarding educating students with disabilities, we are continuing our 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 document outlines expectations about the instructional models we will use during remote instruction.



## **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 administrator.

- 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, Google Classroom, Zoom, and phone conferences, combined with the following:
  - Daily social and emotional wellness check-ins with students
  - Age-appropriate activities and lessons
  - 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. Asynchronous learning means instruction and learning that do not occur at the same time for all students. This enables families to work at their own pace and allows for students to learn the same material at different times independently.

- Asynchronous instruction consists of daily activities 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
  - Video lessons
  - Discussion with parents on Google Classroom
  - Phone communication

## **What should a teacher's workday look like?**

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

- Synchronous whole and small group instruction and individualized student support
- Planning for asynchronous age-appropriate activities
- Monitoring student engagement
- Individualized or small group check-ins to support work progress
- Supporting students and families
- 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.
- Work in coordination with related service providers and parents to develop and implement student programs and services.

## **Staffing/Human Resources**

### **Staffing Regulatory Flexibilities**

To provide flexibility for in-person Prekindergarten programs in the 2021-2022 school year, the following will be allowable:

- Primary Instruction
  - Primary instruction should be delivered by a certified teacher as outlined in Education Law sections 3602-e and 3602-ee.
  - For flexibility and to comply with social distancing requirements for the 2021-2022 school year, another staff member can oversee students during learning centers in an alternate learning space so the lead teacher can provide primary instruction to students.

### **Testing of Unvaccinated Staff**

With the start of the new school year, the Preschools, beginning on September 2, 2021, all faculty and staff are required to be vaccinated or present weekly negative PCR COVID-19 test results. There is no exemption to the PCR COVID-19 testing requirement. A rapid or home test is not acceptable per this mandate.

Staff will not be eligible for sick time if they fail to provide timely test results. Staff can arrange to be vaccinated during work hours. However, staff cannot use work time and will not be paid for the time required to get their weekly PCR COVID-19 test, unless the test is provided at your work site. Staff cannot count on Rising Ground to assure timely on-site testing and they retain full responsibility for providing timely weekly test results even if the tests are conducted on-site.

Please note the following:

- You are required to get the PCR test that is listed as NON-Rapid test (the rapid test is not acceptable)

- It is recommended that you take the test at least three (3) days in advance of the due date (do not wait until the day before)
- The website for testing in NYC is [COVID-19 Testing - Coronavirus \(nyc.gov\)](https://www.nyc.gov/covid-19-testing)
- If you enter a NYC zip code, you will get a list of testing sites that indicate whether they do Rapid and/or non-Rapid test and how long the non-rapid test generally takes.
- For no cost testing: <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/test-and-trace/testing/>
- [Find a Test Site Near You | Department of Health \(ny.gov\)](https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/test-and-trace/testing/)
- **Please submit proof of your negative PCR COVID-19 test on or before your due date to [WEEKLYpctest@risingground.org](mailto:WEEKLYpctest@risingground.org).**

## **PPE distribution**

- All staff (regardless of vaccination status) will be required to wear facemask while on school property. . 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. 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 school. If your temperature is 100.0 or over please call your supervisor and let them know you need to stay home.
- 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 school and
  - immediately report this to Human Resources following the procedure that has been established.
  - As per CDC, vaccinated adults do not have to quarantine after exposure unless they develop symptoms.
  - Unvaccinated adults in schools, masked or not, should quarantine any time they have been within six feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.
- You present a contagion risk if:
  - You tested positive for coronavirus in the preceding 2 weeks, or
  - 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, or
  - You have a temperature exceeding 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- If you start feeling sick or experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms while in the school, 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 for all staff to ensure social distancing in the faculty room. (i.e. A distance seating arrangement in the faculty room will be created).
  - Demarcation 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.

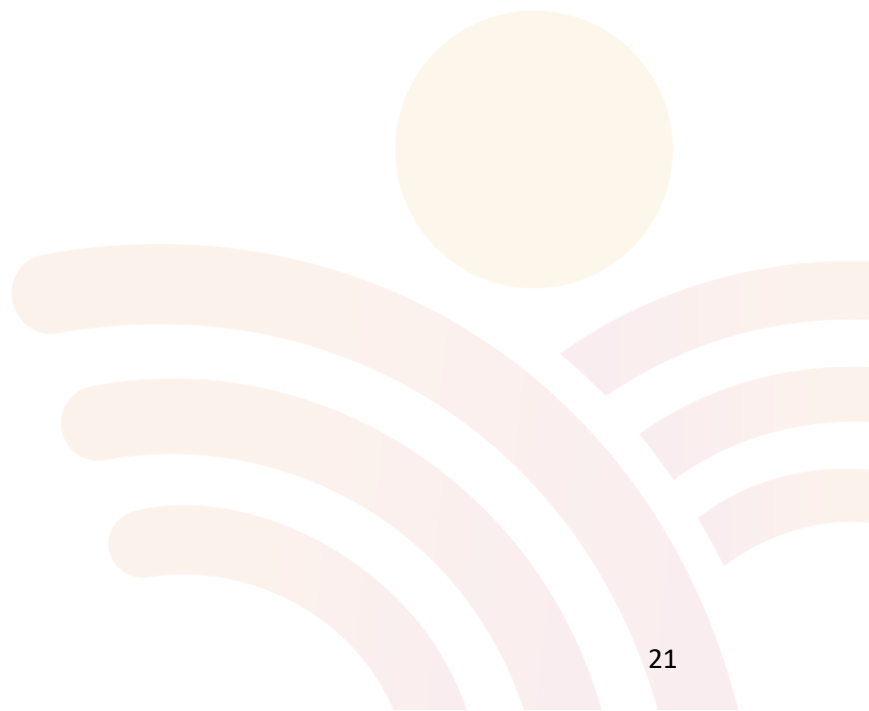
### **Distribution of PPEs**

- 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.

### **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
- 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 disinfection



## Resources

### New York State Education Department

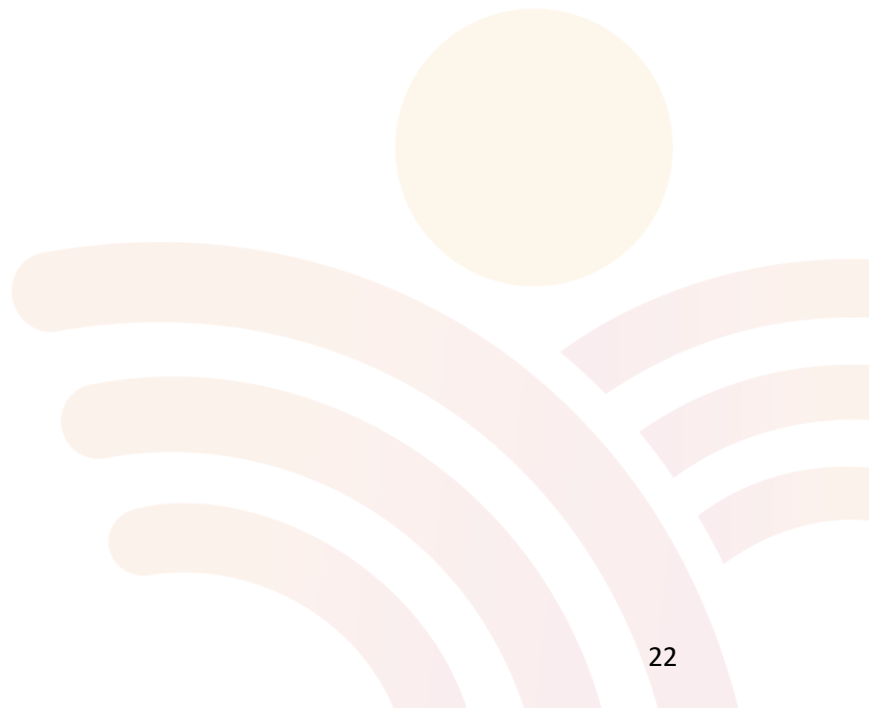
- Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s School: Reopening Guidance  
[NYSED reopening guidance](#)

### 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

## 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:

### When should students quarantine?

First question: Did a student come into close contact — within six feet, for at least 15 minutes — with a student who has COVID? The 15 minutes could be consecutive or come through three blocks of five minutes over the course of a day.

If yes and the student is fully vaccinated, he/she should be referred for testing, but don't need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.

If the student is not vaccinated, the next questions are just how close they were to the infected peer, whether both were masked, and if the exposure happened in a classroom.

If the student was in a classroom, at least three feet from the infected student, *and* both students were wearing masks the whole time, the exposed student does not have to quarantine. But if students were less than three feet apart in a classroom, less than six feet apart elsewhere in school, *or* either student was unmasked, quarantining is necessary, the CDC says.

### When do teachers and staff need to quarantine?

As per the CDC, the quarantining recommendations are similar for school staff and students. Vaccinated adults do not have to quarantine after exposure unless they develop symptoms.

Unvaccinated adults in schools, masked or not, should quarantine any time they have been within six feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.

### 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.

### √ 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.

### √ Cases in School: Dismiss students and staff according to local and state officials.

1. *Two or three confirmed cases in **different classrooms** within seven days:*
  - *Classrooms of each case remain closed and quarantined for 10 days.*
  - *Students in the impacted classrooms move to remote learning for 10 days.*
  - *School members who are considered to be close contact are quarantined for 10 days and work remotely.*
  - *Individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will not be required to quarantine or work remotely unless they develop symptoms.*
  - *School remains open.*
  
2. *Four or more confirmed positive cases in **four different classrooms** within seven days: Westchester County DOH will initiate an investigation. If the investigation determines:*
  - ***Not all cases are linked to transmission in school, then:***
    - *Westchester County DOH will interview all cases.*
    - *The classroom of the positive cases remains closed and quarantined for 10 days.*
    - *Students in the impacted classroom move to remote learning for 10 days.*
    - *School members who are considered to be close contact are quarantined for 10 days and work remotely.*
    - *Individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will not be required to quarantine or work remotely unless they develop symptoms.*
    - *School remains open.*
  
  - ***All cases are linked to transmission in school, then:***
    - *Westchester County DOH or NYSDOH will interview all cases.*
    - *Entire school is closed for electrostatic cleaning.*
    - *The classroom of the positive cases remains closed and quarantined for 10 days.*
    - *Students in the impacted classroom move to remote learning for 10 days.*
    - *School members who are considered to be close contact, except for fully vaccinated individuals are quarantined for 10 days.*
    - *All students are moved to remote learning during electrostatic cleaning.*
    - *All staff will pivot to remote instruction during electrostatic cleaning.*

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.

- During school dismissals, extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs, and parent meetings will be cancelled.
- Staff, students, and their families who are quarantined 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.**

