

## New England for Children Fall Reopening Plan

August 12, 2020

New England Center for Children's (NECC) plan is based upon the guidance from CDC, DESE, EEC, and in consultation with Southborough Board of Health, MA Department of Public Health, and consulting Primary Care Physician, Dr. Anna Bottar.

The reopening approach is built on DESE guidance that included a thorough review of current medical and scientific literature and was developed after extensive consultation with medical professionals from Massachusetts General Hospital, the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center's Medical Advisory Board, and others. Based on the current public health data and COVID-19 trends in Massachusetts, the medical community supports the return of Massachusetts students to in-person learning, with appropriate health and safety guidelines in place.

As of today, August 12, 2020, NECC's day (IIP) and residential programs are open and providing the In-Person Learning Model.

Our residential programs have remained open throughout the pandemic with students receiving in-person instruction with a consistent schedule of services as required by their IEP. Our plan for residential students is to incorporate on-site school days an average of 2-3 days a week to ensure social distancing and reduced occupancy within classrooms/clusters. On the alternate days, students will continue to receive in-person instruction at the residence. In-person instruction is provided across all 5 days by the same group of teachers, only the location will change. A licensed special education teacher is present at the residence during the school hours.

Our day program (Intensive Instruction Program, IIP) reopened for full-day in-person learning on July 7, 2020.

Our guiding principles for continued in-person instruction are:

1. The safety and well-being of students, staff, and families while maximizing learning is our priority.
2. Our Emergency Management Team, composed of members of the executive committee across Health Services, Administration, Education, and Clinical Services, Enrollment and Family Support, and Human Resources, have created a plan that meets or surpasses all state guidelines to provide a safe learning environment. Four members of the Emergency Management Team are MA licensed special educators.
3. We expect our staff and families to take personal responsibility for the safety of the school community, as well as their own. It is critical that everyone follows the outlined procedures, including staying home when not feeling well.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

**Cohort model and distancing:** Residential student's cohorts consists of their housemates (team). As residential students return to the school building teams that share learning space (cluster) will be limited to one team per day. IIP cohorts are based upon class assignments with no more than 13 students in a cohort. Students remain with their cohort across the day. Students and staff remain at 6 feet whenever possible. Alternative spaces in the school have been repurposed to allow for increased space.

**Masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** All staff wear a mask throughout the day with designated safe spaces for mask breaks. Typically, cloth masks are used, but if needed surgical, KN95, or N95 masks are provided for staff. All parents should provide their children with masks. Many of our students have quickly become excellent mask wearers. For those who cannot tolerate a mask across the day, we are focusing on teaching and reinforcing this skill. Additional PPE (gowns, face shields, goggles) is available for situations that require close contact or involve anyone who is symptomatic. All staff have been trained on the proper way to don/doff and dispose of PPE.

**Screening for COVID-19 symptoms:** All IIP families are responsible for screening their children for COVID-19 symptoms as indicated by the latest CDC and DESE guidance. All NECC staff are responsible for screening the IIP and Residential students across the day. All NECC staff are responsible for self-screening prior to arriving to work each day. All symptoms must be reported before entry and Health Services and the Emergency Management Team will advise on a return to school plan.

**Hand hygiene:** Frequent handwashing opportunities are provided, and visual reminders are located in all areas of the school. Hand sanitizing stations have been installed in high touch areas. Proper handwashing technique is taught and reinforced for all students.

**Facility Cleaning and Ventilation:** Our classrooms are cleaned daily and as needed across the day under the oversight of our Director of Facilities. Cleaning and disinfecting supplies are available in all classrooms. Electrostatic fogging machines are used to provide additional infection control for the classrooms, playgrounds, gym, and pool area. Time is incorporated in the schedule to have the playgrounds, gym, and pool fogged before the next group uses the space. NECC consulted with HVAC experts and have upgraded our ventilation system to include a UV air purification system. This system "uses a high-intensity UVC germicidal lamp (UV light) to neutralize airborne bacteria, viruses, fungi, and mold for pure air." This system is installed at the school and will be installed in all residences by the end of August 2020. Additionally, we have implemented increased inspection and replacement of all HVAC filters at the school and at the residences.

**Educational Supplies and Toys:** Sharing materials is discouraged, but when shared, they must be cleaned and disinfected before being used by other students. Books and other paper-based materials are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning procedures. Additional materials have been purchased for the school and residences to minimize any sharing of materials (e.g. art supplies, yoga mats, etc.) Only materials that can be washed and sanitized can be shared across students.

**Transition procedures:** Residential students are similar to siblings and therefore ride in the vans together. Windows will be open when safety allows allowing for increased ventilation. Masks will be worn by staff and students during the transition from the residence to school and for any trips to the community. IIP families are encouraged to transport their children when possible. Districts providing transportation must develop a written transportation plan following appropriate health and safety protocols. Entry and exit routes have been modified to minimize gathering in these areas.

**Lunch and snacks:** All students eat in their classrooms to allow for distancing. Any teachers assisting with feeding must wear a mask and gloves.

**Toileting Protocols:** Capacity restrictions are in place to reduce the number of people in a shared bathroom. Staff will change students' clothing and their own clothing when soiled with secretions or body fluids, appropriate PPE will be worn by staff.

**Hallway Traffic:** Foot traffic is labeled in high traffic areas to encourage staff and students to remain 6 feet apart.

**Medical Waiting Room Protocol:** If a student is exhibiting a symptom, they are moved to the designated medical waiting room and the nurse is called for guidance. If needed, the teacher will don full PPE (e.g. gown, gloves, surgical mask, and goggle or face shield). If it is an IIP student, the parent will be called to pick their child up. If a residential student requires isolation, the nurse and team will work together to initiate isolation protocols and notification of the student's parent/guardian. The waiting room is cleaned and disinfected after each instance of use.

**Infection protocols:** If a staff, student, tests positive they must seek medical attention before returning to school. If a household member of a staff or student tests positive, they must inform EMT or their child's specialist/director who will inform EMT. EMT will advise the return to school plan based upon the most recent guidance from CDC, DPH, and DESE. If a student has close contact (as defined by CDC) with a positive case, they must isolate for 14 days and follow DPH guidance regarding testing. Staff and families will be notified of any positive staff or student cases in their cohort.

**Visitors to the school:** Visitors are discouraged. Specific needs are reviewed by EMT to determine if the visit is critical. If critical, EMT will advise on how the visit may occur.

**Travel Protocols:** In accordance with MA state guidelines, if a student or household member travels outside of the approved region they must quarantine for 14 days. Staff must also follow MA guidance and with a negative test can return to work. As an additional precaution a second test is required after they have returned for 5 days.

**NECC Employee training:** All employees have successfully completed a training on COVID-19 policies and procedures.

**Frequent communication:** Case manager will continue to provide weekly contacts with parents to review progress and notification of any significant incidents or medical concerns. In addition, NECC will provide frequent and thorough communication with staff and families regarding COVID-19 related policies and procedures, including spread, risk factors and prevention strategies. Information can be

found on the NECC website, in the Parent Memo, and other all school communications via School Messenger.

### **Remote Learning Plan**

This model is not ideal for our student population; however, a family of a student in the IIP can choose remote learning for their child due to concerns with in-person instruction. Remote learning is also offered while a student in the IIP or residential program may need to quarantine at home. Residential students are not required to quarantine at home. Protocols are in place to safely quarantine residential students on site.

When a family chooses remote learning for their child, NECC will work with the family to identify any barriers to the student accessing remote learning and will work with the family and sending district to resolve these issues to the fullest extent possible.

NECC's remote learning plan includes two technology platforms: Zoom for synchronous live and recorded lessons and parent conferences, and SeeSaw for the posting of student-specific instructional activities and materials related to IEP objectives and general enrichment. Each student will have an individualized plan that includes daily assignments and a schedule of synchronous sessions.

NECC will track student attendance in all synchronous remote learning sessions and completed work in SeeSaw.

All group remote academic sessions for both IIP and Residential students are related to the students' IEP objectives, and our individual remote academic sessions target IEP objectives with data collection. Students' academic (ELA, Math, History/Social Science, Science, Technology/Engineering) IEP objectives are related to state standards (typically entry points); other IEP objectives are related to or self-care, vocational, leisure skills/recreation, adapted physical education, motor skills, and community skills. NECC will ensure that all academic objectives in core subject areas (entry points aligned to MA Curriculum Frameworks) are prioritized in synchronous learning sessions.

During remote learning receive at least weekly contact about their child's progress with his/her IEP goals (and work with the school district to provide any needed interpretation/translation services). Student progress reports will be sent at least quarterly and on the same schedule for students learning remotely as those learning in school.

### **School Calendar:**

<https://www.necc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-2021-IIP-Vacation-Calendar.pdf>

<https://www.necc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020-2021-Residential-Vacation-Calendar.pdf>