

**NIAGARA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**2020-2021 REOPENING PLAN**

**BEDS CODE# 400400642200**

## **Introduction**

At the Niagara County Department of Health- Children with Special Needs division our primary commitment is to the students, families and community we serve. Our priority must be keeping them safe. This School Reopening Plan, closely follows the Newfane School District reopening plan and will define clear guidance for the reopening of our classroom at the Newfane Early Childhood Center and align with the regulations developed in collaboration with NYSDOH and the NYS Education Department.

This plan includes procedures that will be followed at the Newfane Early Childhood Center, where our SCIS classroom is integrated with the Newfane School District's UPK program. Pete Young is currently Principal at this location.

To be clear, the health and safety of our students, our staff, and their families is our top priority. We have developed a plan that intends to insure that students and employees feel comfortable and safe returning to the classroom. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

It is possible that we may need to blend in-person and remote or virtual instruction and learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Education Department, and the Governor's Office. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of decision making as we move to open our schools.

At the Newfane Early Childhood Center, the school nurse will serve as the COVID-19 liaison to the District's COVID-19 Coordinator. Each nurse will serve as the central contact for their school and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members. Together with the District COVID-19 Coordinator, they will ensure the district is in compliance and following the best practices per local, state and federal guidelines.

This document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, CDC, and NYSED and in consideration of our families and our staff.

## **Guiding Principles**

The development of this plan was guided by and grounded in the following guiding principles:

- The safety and well-being of our children, and our employees, must be a primary consideration of our plan.
- We believe that the best place to educate our children socially, emotionally, physically and academically is at school.
- Social distancing and the use of masks are non-negotiable requirements.
- Cohorting of students and reducing density are essential to the plan.
- Instructional components of our plan must be developed to facilitate a seamless transition to off-site instruction should that become necessary.

## **Communication/Family and Community Engagement**

To help inform our reopening plan, our classroom in conjunction with Newfane Central School District has sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers and employee unions. Engagement efforts included online surveys, virtual forums/meetings and one-on-one conversations.

As part of our planning for the reopening of this classroom and the new academic year, the division in conjunction with the district has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication modes – including district wide mass communication through email, text messaging and telephone calls; social media; district website and mobile app – as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations.

Our Communication Goals include:

- to provide and reinforce information regarding best practices, as identified by the CDC, NYSDOH and NYSED, related to the prevention and minimization of risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- to provide regular updates about health and safety, scheduling, and all other information faculty, staff and families should be aware of.
- to provide information to families through a wide array of platforms including mail, email, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and website postings.
- to provide information on how families can access technology and receive technical support to assist with utilization and maintenance of equipment.

Our agency will use developed communication materials devised by the Newfane Central School District accordingly, including the creation of sample messages/letters for COVID-19 cases or potential cases for various school audiences. We will utilize the above mentioned communication methods to inform the school community.

Clear messaging will be prepared and consistently communicated before re-entry and continuously throughout the year. Monthly communication will provide information on the following topics:

- who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions, empowering people to make a positive difference and communicate the expectation for them to do so.
- the importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home.
- Protocols for entering buildings (screening) and the expectations for social distancing in bathrooms, break rooms, hallways, etc.
- Proper hand hygiene.

- Proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into your elbow if a tissue is not available).
- Personal responsibility for yourself and your work area.
- Proper use and disposal of Personal Protective Equipment.

## **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to the classroom. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

The Children with Special Needs Program is a division within the *Niagara* County Department of Health and the Newfane School District has a longstanding partnership with four (4) hospitals within Niagara County: Kaleida DeGraff Memorial Hospital, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Mount Saint Mary's Hospital and Eastern Niagara Hospital - Lockport. Local hospital capacity may be found at: New York State Department of Health: Hospital: Bed Types. Regarding medical surge bed availability, the local school districts may work with the Niagara County Department of Health and local hospital partners for situational awareness as needed.

## **Facility Entry**

To ensure all faculty, staff, students, and visitors comply with physical distancing requirements, anyone within the Newfane Early Childhood Center (NECC) will practice these social distancing expectations:

- where feasible, entry and egress in and out of all buildings may be limited to identified locations.
- a face covering must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors on the Newfane CSD property.
- proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- all individuals may choose to utilize their own face covering; however face coverings will be available at no charge at the site.

## **Daily Health Screening**

- parents are expected to monitor for temperatures and symptoms prior to sending their child(ren) to school on a bus or personally transporting them to school.
- trained staff members will be stationed at all building entrances at student arrival time to observe students as they enter the building and identify individuals for additional screenings.
- any student whose health condition changes during the school day should immediately report that to the nearest adult and await further instructions.

- staff must complete a health screening survey immediately upon arriving at work via the electronic submission form. For staff without computer access, a paper copy of the health screening survey will be completed at their work location.
- staff will be required to monitor their own temperatures prior to arrival on campus and throughout the day. Anyone whose symptoms response changes from a NO to YES during the day, must contact their supervisor immediately and await further instruction.
- all staff members who leave the building after the start of the work day must sign in and out each time they enter and/or exit a building.
- should a person fail the medical screening, specific procedures should be followed: Exposure Response Flowchart

## **Social Distancing**

- all individuals at the NECC must maintain social distancing and wear a proper face covering.
- social distancing is defined as a six (6) foot separation between individuals. When social distancing is practiced, such as in an isolated office or large meeting space, individuals may remove their face covering. However in common areas, such as breakrooms, hallways or bathrooms, the face covering must be worn.
- ensure six (6) foot distance between individuals, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance. Any time individuals are less than six (6) feet apart from one another, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings.
- tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings. If an area is occupied by more than one person, keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity whenever practicable.
- wall, floor or other appropriate signage will be used to denote six (6) feet of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on our campuses.
- in-person gatherings will be prohibited whenever possible and the use of tele- or video-conferencing is strongly encouraged. Essential in-person meetings must be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries will be established, limiting contact to the extent possible. All “front door” mail deliveries (USPS, UPS, Amazon, FedEx, DHL, etc.) will only be received at the Central Services office on Charlotteville Road. All other deliveries must be received at the custodial/loading dock entrance to the building. Deliveries for our specific classroom will be delivered to our main office and transported to the classroom at a later date.

## Personal Hygiene

Hand washing - Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Schools should plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

- Hand hygiene includes:
  - Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), which is the preferred method. ;
  - Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap and water; Use of paper towels or touch-free paper towel dispensers where feasible (hand dryers are not recommended as they can disperse germs into the air);
  - Use of no-touch/foot pedal trash can where feasible;
  - Extra time in the schedule to encourage frequent hand washing.
- Instruction in good hand hygiene will include:
  - The use of aural cues to ensure proper length of washing (i.e. humming the happy birthday song twice);
  - Signage encouraging hand washing and showing correct techniques; periodic demonstration and modeling of correct techniques in the classroom.
- Students and staff should wash hands:
  - Upon entering the building and classrooms;
  - After sharing objects or surfaces;
  - Before and after snacks and lunch;
  - After using the bathroom;
  - After helping a student with toileting;
  - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
  - Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
- Hand Sanitizer - At times when hand washing is not possible, students and staff may use a hand sanitizer. In order for the sanitizer to be effective it must contain a minimum of 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol. It should be noted the sanitizers are flammable and students must be monitored and supervised when using these. Placement of sanitizer dispensers should be located near entrances and throughout common areas, and signage should be placed near sanitizer dispensers encouraging the use of soap and water whenever possible.

## Visitor and Vendor Practices

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed IN NECC, except when necessary for the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the front office and not be allowed to enter the building proper unless it is absolutely necessary and they are accompanied by a staff member. Essential visitors to facilities and parent/guardian visitors will be required to wear face coverings and will have restricted access to our school buildings.

### Visitors

- Prior to being allowed to enter, all visitors must fill out the COVID-19 CHECK-IN SCREENING (which can be found by scanning the QR Code posted on all doors). Upon entrance, visitors may be subject to temperature screening at the discretion of the district.
- No visitor should enter a building unless necessary. Building staff members may meet parents who are dropping off items for their child at the entrance to relieve unnecessary traffic in the building. Any necessary meetings or conferences with parents should be held virtually when possible.
- All visitors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times when in the building.
- All visitors must sign in and out at the Main Office of each building, stating their destination in that building for contact tracing. Any visitor leaving the Main Office for other parts of the building must be accompanied by a staff member.
- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they are visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.
- At the end of each day, the building secretary must scan the sign-in/out documents and send them to [dailysigninsheets@newfancentralschools.org](mailto:dailysigninsheets@newfancentralschools.org) and use the following file naming convention: LOCATIONMMDDYYYY.pdf For example: NHS09082020 for NECC on September 8, 2020.

### Vendors

- Prior to being allowed to enter, all vendors must fill out the COVID-19 CHECK-IN SCREENING (which can be found by scanning the QR Code posted on all doors). Upon entrance, vendors may be subject to temperature screening at the discretion of the district.
- All vendors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times when in the building.
- All vendors must sign in and out with the Custodian of each building. The custodian shall be responsible for entering this information into the District wide vendor database.
- Should a vendor become ill while on campus, they must alert the custodian to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.

- At the end of each day, the custodian must review his/her entries in the database to ensure accuracy.
- No vendor should enter a building unless necessary for completion of their job. All meetings should be held outside or virtually when possible.

## **Training**

Children with Special Needs will train all personnel on new protocols and safety guidelines in addition to all required training by Newfane School District. Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Social distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants if training is conducted in person. Training material is designed to be easy to understand for all workers, and will be archived and readily accessible for review and continuing training.

Our agency will work with Newfane Central School District will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional instruction will be provided in:

- Preventative measures to reduce the spread of disease (i.e. staying home when they are sick).
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide information on proper disinfection procedures between use. Examples of communal objects include, but are not limited to, other individuals' phones, desks, water bottles, computers or other devices or equipment.
- Up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.
- Risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE).

## **Training for Screeners**

Our agency in conjunction with NCSO will use all available resources( including but not limited to: Orleans Niagara BOCES Safety Specialist, registered nurses in all buildings, Global Compliance Network (GCN) tutorials, and updated Center for Disease Control (CDC) resources) to effectively and efficiently train the entire workforce on identifying possible signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

## **Training topics and resources for all staff and substitutes**

- Proper hand washing: proper hand hygiene.
- When and How to Wash Your Hands | Handwashing ○ Hand washing video
- Proper cough and sneeze (respiratory) etiquette
- Social Distancing ○ Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation
- What to do if you are not feeling well
- What to Do If You Are Sick
- Proper cleaning techniques
- Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces for COVID-19

- Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes
- Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes ○ GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING
- Hazard Communication – Right-To-Know ○ Hazard Communication ○ List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) | US EPA
- Selection, Maintenance and Care of Personal Protective Equipment - PPE ○ Use Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow Spread
- Use of face coverings (donning/doffing) (cloth vs. surgical) ○ Face coverings don/doff video ○ Demonstration of Doffing (Taking Off) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Respirator Protection (N95 - required for identified employees per NYS)
- OSHA Requirements for Occupational Use of N95 Respirators in Healthcare
- Managing food allergies for non-food service staff.
- Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies In Schools and Early Care and Education Programs

### **Signage and Messages**

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face cover.

### **Facilities**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection at the NECC, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and regular thorough cleaning of all spaces. Every effort will be made to meet the requirements for changes associated with the alternate use of building spaces. Plans for changes to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code. As our agency works directly within the Newfane CSD's physical space, this section is part of their plan for their facility at NECC.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold-opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

Per the Newfane CSD reopening plan the district plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is "normally occupied." Upon reopening, the district plans to increase ventilation within buildings and classrooms, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

The following actions will be taken as needed:

- Reduce the number of drinking fountains available, while staying compliant with code, to facilitate frequent cleaning.

- Submission of all alterations to the configuration of existing classrooms or spaces or the introduction of temporary and/or movable partitions to OFP, the local municipality and/or code enforcement officials for review.
- Maintain the minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building as established in the building code.
- Maintain adequate, Code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

The NCDOH- Children with Special Needs division will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19,” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster, as applicable. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection by district staff.

As noted previously in this document, students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual’s use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

Disinfectants must be products that meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and be appropriate for the surface.

### **General Office Area**

- Social distancing and face covering rules will be in effect for all offices.
- Where practicable, all small spaces will be limited to one (1) individual at a time.
- Additional protective barriers such as polycarbonate screens or strip curtains will be utilized to create a physical separation without hindrance to egress or airflow.
- Additional breaks may be allotted to allow individuals time to leave the space to remove their masks. Specific determination of these conditions will be determined by the individual’s program supervisor.

## **Conference Rooms**

- Employees will be encouraged to use virtual meeting tools, including phone and virtual teleconference, in lieu of in-person meetings, whenever possible.
- If in-person meetings are essential, participants must follow established social distancing and face covering protocols.
- Lingering and socializing before or after meetings should be discouraged.

## **Break Rooms and Lunch Rooms**

- Breakroom use must follow established social distancing and face covering protocols.
- Staff are advised to take their lunch and breaks in their private offices or classrooms; in their vehicles or outside the building.
- Staggered break schedules may be utilized to assist with separation concerns.
- Staff breaks must be done in a large space or outside, where at minimum 6ft. of separation can occur. ● Amenities that are handled with high contact frequency, such as water fountains, coffee makers, and bulk snacks will be replaced with alternatives where possible.
- Communal meals will not be provided to employees, and food will not be available in common areas where employees may congregate.

## **Copier Rooms/Areas**

- Congregating near office copiers is not allowed.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided at copier stations.
- Staff are encouraged to wipe down touch surfaces post and prior use.

## **Restrooms**

- To adhere to social distance, the number of simultaneous users in any bathroom will be limited.
- In special circumstances where a student requires assistance in the use of the lavatory, the adult present must be wearing all applicable personal protective equipment including a face covering and when medically applicable, the student will be wearing a proper face covering as well.

## **Hallways/Stairwells**

- Where practicable, hallway traffic may be limited to single flow direction.
- Directional flow will be identified by signage on the floor/stairs and walls.
- All individuals must allow for adequate space between each other when traveling in the same direction.

## **Classrooms**

- Occupancy in each classroom will be determined based on the overall square footage of the space. For our classroom , a total of 12 children will be allowed to begin the school year.
- Additional considerations will be taken into account for space utilized for classrooms and teaching material.
- Overall class sizes will be reduced to adhere to social distancing guidelines. For our classroom, 6 identified children and 6 non-disabled peers
- Students, teachers and support staff will be required to wear a proper face covering.
- Restrict items in the classroom to expand the available space:
- Remove any unnecessary furniture.
- Remove any soft surfaces that are difficult to disinfect.
- Community use of equipment will be limited.
- Cleaning and disinfection of computers and keyboards will be frequent
- Keyboards and mice should be wiped and disinfected before and after each use.
- Students should be instructed to wash hands prior to and after touching the keyboards along with other frequently touched surfaces.

## **Health Offices ( nursing services provided by NCS district)**

- All students and staff are required to wear appropriate face coverings.
- N95 mask use for nurses and other staff should be limited to situations of suspected COVID-19
- Nurses and other staff must receive proper training and fitment of N95 masks prior to use.
- Where applicable, health offices will be reconfigured to:
- Maintain social distancing of no less than 6ft.
- Allow students who receive daily medication to be treated separately from students presenting with symptoms of illness.
- Physical separation may be achieved by utilizing:
  - Polycarbonate barriers
  - Retractable dividing curtain walls. Isolation Rooms

A separate room inside of nurse's office at the Newfane Early Childhood Center has been identified for use in isolating students and staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19

## **Ventilation**

Newfane Central School District will ensure sufficient ventilation and fresh air to all spaces of occupancy by means of the Building Management System.

## **Suspect or Confirmed COVID Cases**

This portion of the Newfane Central School District will be strictly followed by our staff working in the NECC under the direction of the school nurse:

- Emergency Response - Students, staff or visitors with symptoms of illness must be sent to the health office immediately. The school nurse (Registered Professional Nurse, RN) will assess these individuals to evaluate the possibility that symptoms are COVID-19 related. Proper PPE will be required anytime a nurse may be in contact with a potential COVID-19 patient
- Isolation - Students suspected of having COVID-19 awaiting transport home by the parent/guardian will be remanded to the isolation room, with a supervising adult present utilizing appropriate PPE. If multiple students are present in the isolation room social distancing must be maintained. Face coverings will be provided if tolerable and does not cause difficulty breathing. Students should be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The parent or guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider, or to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center;
- Cleaning and disinfecting of affected locations will follow the previously outlined protocols.
- Notification - the NYS and Niagara County Health Departments will be notified immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff and visitors.

## **Contact Tracing**

Once notified, contact tracing is the responsibility of the Niagara County Department of Health. The Newfane CSD will assist their efforts in any way possible.

## **Return to School after Illness**

The Newfane CSD has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department, for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. Our agency will adhere to these protocols, as well. This protocol includes:

- Documentation from a health care provider following evaluation
- Negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result
- Symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation

The district will refer to DOH's "Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure" regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be determined in coordination with the Niagara County health department.

## **School/ District Closure Considerations**

When a person has been identified (confirmed) or suspected to be COVID-19 positive, the extended closure decision process in the Newfane CSD will include:

- collaboration and coordination with other local school officials, the BOCES superintendent and local health officials regarding school closure and large event cancellations.
- consideration of the impact of implementing the remote instruction and learning plan on the continuity of education, medical and social services, and meal programs.
- consideration of implementing a short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building, with respect to:
  - Closing off areas used by ill person(s) and locking off area(s).
  - Waiting 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting the area.
  - Ability to open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - Identification of all areas used by the ill person(s) and our ability to properly clean and disinfect those areas prior to reopening. o Communicating with staff, parents, and students.
- Consideration of DOH guidance/procedures for when someone tests positive with respect to the need for people in close contact with the COVID positive individual to quarantine.
- Acknowledgement that the closure of schools could be a regional decision, out of the hands of the local district leadership.

## **Emergency Response Protocols & Drills**

The 2020-2021 school year may include hybrid models of the traditional school day. Emergency response drills, including evacuation and lockdown drills, will be spread across the different student populations in order to ensure all students have an opportunity to experience emergency response drills.

### **Emergency Response Protocols:**

#### **Shelter-In-Place**

Areas will be identified at the NECC that will be used for the Shelter-in-Place (along with areas that cannot be used specific to certain types of environmental hazards i.e.: high winds, tornado, etc.). Shelter-In-Place protocols will be the same with the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Shelter-In-Place whenever practicable.
- Use of face coverings throughout the drill will be required.

#### **Hold-In-Place**

Hold-In-Place protocols will be the same the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Hold-In-Place whenever practicable.
- Use of face coverings throughout the drill will be required.

## **Evacuation**

Evacuation protocols will be routinely the same with some minor adjustments:

- Identify areas outside of the building that will facilitate social distancing of students and staff and will not impede emergency responders.
- The use of face coverings throughout the drill will be required.
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Identify a single person responsible for holding the door open throughout the drill. Personnel will be assigned to holding the door until confirmation that everyone has vacated the building.
- Extra face coverings and hand sanitizer may be added to the list of necessary items as established in current protocols.

## **Lockout**

Lockout protocols will be the same, besides maintaining six (6) feet of space between students and staff in the area.

## **Lockdown**

During an actual lockdown, there will be a necessary violation of the social distancing protocol. However, in drill situations, supervisors must identify and explain this incongruity to students. In addition, supervisors should:

- Evaluate, in advance, if there is room to social distance without being in the line of sight in their particular room or space.
- remind students that face coverings should be worn during the event at all times.

## **Child Nutrition**

All schools in the Newfane CSD, including the UPK collaboration, will follow SFA policies when communicating about school meal services, eligibility, options and changes in operations. Children who are placed in the Children with Special needs classroom are entitled to the same meal services as all other UPK children in the district. All meals provided during the public health emergency will be available at no cost to all children. All communications will be provided through a variety of communication methods including website, social media, emails, robocalls, newsletters, and regular mail and translated into the languages spoken by families.

The Newfane CSD has identified Joanne Huntington as the contact person to receive and respond to communications from families and to school staff. Families will be reminded in food service communications during the summer and periodically that they can submit a new application for free and reduced-price meals any time during the school year. Applications are available in each school building,

on our website and through email or regular mail as needed. Phone in and in-person support to complete the application is available from our Food Service Director.

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

For information about how meal information will be communicated, visit the Communication/Family and Community Engagement section of the Newfane School District reopening plan.

### **Meals Onsite and Offsite**

For students at the NECC, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The agency will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria. Student movement will be designed to facilitate single directional flow and seating will be socially distant. The cafeteria will be outfitted with hand sanitizer stations at each entrance and exit. Students will be encouraged to utilize them upon entering and exiting the cafeteria. Directional arrows and floor markings will be used to maintain social distancing while students are in line. After students exit the lunch line, the serving line will be wiped down with an approved disinfectant before the next set of students arrive. After each lunch period, the tables and chairs will be wiped down with an approved disinfectant by the cafeteria monitors.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household.

If it is not feasible to serve students in the cafeteria, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) to ensure social distancing and allow for proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

Cafeteria staff will work with the school nurse and appropriate additional staff to ensure that information regarding students with food allergies is disseminated as necessary.

Meals will be provided for students who are learning remotely, whether every day or on an alternating A/B schedule. Meals may be picked up at school by the parent/guardian, or when necessary, delivery service will be arranged.

All meals served, whether in the cafeteria, the classroom or provided for students at home, will continue to follow all SED and USDA requirements.

### **Transportation**

For the 2020-2021 school year, all children in our agency classroom will be 4 years or older and Newfane residents and therefore eligible to ride the district buses with all other UPK children.

## **Transportation Communication**

Our agency in conjunction with the district will stress with parents and students that student transportation vehicles are included in the district's COVID-19 plans; and that students and parents will play an important role in ensuring safety and minimizing infection while utilizing District transportation services. We will:

- Advise parents not to send their children to school or board the bus if sick or with an elevated temperature;
- Survey parents regarding transportation including an "opt-out" option;
- Remind students/parents/guardians that social distancing requirements extend to the bus stop.

## **Density Reduction, Social Distancing, Bus Capacity**

- Seating will be limited to one child per seat; however, siblings or those that live in the same household may be allowed to sit together.
- Students will be required to wear a face covering at all times on the bus.
- Appropriate signage and markings will be used to indicate where students should sit and to mark six (6) foot distances in aisles. • Students will not be seated directly behind the driver
- Additional adult supervision (monitors) will be provided when necessary and/or practicable.

## **Loading/Unloading & Pickup/Drop-off**

Adjustments will be made to pick up and drop off times on an ongoing basis through collaboration between STA and district/building officials. Any published times for pick-up and/or drop-off shall be considered approximate. In the case of extreme deviations from the established schedule, parents will be contacted by school officials.

## **Social Emotional Well-Being**

We are committed to prioritizing social emotional well-being, not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social and emotional space to access academic content with confidence. Our agency social worker collaborates closely with classroom personnel on a regular basis to assess students social emotional well being. She will integrate with district plans as needed to employ the means to identify and actively support student and staff well-being and mental health concerns through a range of pre-determined tactics to be employed by those dealing with difficult situations.

The Agency's commitment is to create emotionally and physically safe, supportive and engaging learning environments promoting all students' social and emotional well-being and development. Counselors, school based health programs, and wrap around supports will play an extremely important role in the adjustment period when buildings reopen and access to school counselors and school-based health programs will be important supports for our students. Mental health/community resources are currently posted on the district website, as well as specific COVID-19 resources pertaining to mental health. In addition, a needs assessment survey will be administered to all students when they return to school or remote learning.

Transitions are important every year, and they will be even more important this fall returning from continuous remote learning to in-person instruction in buildings, alternating day schedules or continuing in a remote environment. We will support these transitions in a culturally responsive manner and engage students, families, and communities in the process of identifying needs and supports.

Training for all staff members will be provided on the following topics to assist them when dealing with social-emotional issues related to COVID and the return to instruction in any form:

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine
- Other emotional or mental health changes

District Mental Health Professionals are available to our agency classroom and will assist to:

- Educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of mental health needs and how to obtain assistance
- Promote social emotional learning competency and build resilience
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making
- Encourage good physical health
- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports; facilitate the expansion of school-based mental health supports

## **Attendance, Attendance Reporting and Chronic Absenteeism**

### **Attendance and Attendance**

Our agency classroom teacher will record daily attendance in eSchool, the district student management system based on the required daily scheduled student contact and engagement as well as the CPSE portal, our preschool claiming software. Daily reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or chronically absent. Contact with the families will be made daily to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have to participate in daily lessons.

## **Chronic Absenteeism**

Our agency will work in conjunction with NECC personnel and the CPSE committee to address chronic absenteeism. We recognize that many factors will influence student attendance, and may be greatly impacted by the instructional models provided; in-person, hybrid, and remote, especially at the preschool level.

## **Technology and Connectivity**

Access to technology is essential for the successful roll-out of this plan. The Newfane CSD has been committed to ongoing planning and implementation of district technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. The team has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable internet and computers. Children in our classroom will be covered by this plan.

1. The Newfane CSD recently gathered data and asked teachers and families to identify their level of access to devices and high-speed broadband from their residence. The district will continue to assess the ongoing needs of our families for technology and connectivity (survey, interviews, school outreach, etc.) In the event, students and/or teachers do not have access, the district will take the necessary steps to meet their needs where plausible.
2. Conduct and/or maintain an inventory of equipment and other assets. a. Identify which students, families, and staff have district assets in their possession.
3. Procure, manage and/or maintain hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.
4. Identify professional learning needs for teachers and continue to support their development of skills and pedagogy in a virtual learning environment.
5. Arrange a “Helpdesk” system for parents/students/teachers to report technical issues that might be experienced during remote learning. Communicate protocols to these stakeholders to inform them in advance of how to gain assistance in such cases.

Our agency will take advantage of the districts technology, as appropriate for individual families. We will provide all students with access to learning materials and resources in multiple formats, wherever possible. In the event students do not have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet, the agency will provide the students with alternate methods to access materials and instruction, i.e. pick up materials at school, drop off materials to students’ homes, etc. The district will also schedule opportunities to connect with families to educate them on how to use the technologies and connect to the instructional activities.

## **Teaching and Learning**

In an effort to assure the continuance of high-quality teaching and learning, a continuity of learning plan has been developed for the 2020-21 school year. This plan considers and plans for teaching and learning in-person, remotely, and through hybrid models of instruction. Our plan assures that Instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and assures equity as well as quality for all learners.

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction in our district will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with state standards. Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on Instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in person, remote or hybrid). Our teaching and learning plan includes a clear communication plan for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology. This information will be accessible to all, available in multiple languages, widely disseminated, and include clear and multiple ways for students and families to contact schools and teachers (e.g., email, online platform (parent portal), and/or by phone) in an effort to assure learning for all.

Our agency was included in district level staff-only professional development days before students arrived at school. The focus was on providing support to staff in the areas of social-emotional health, technology integration and instructing and reinforcing best practices in the areas of hand and respiratory hygiene and maintaining clean work spaces.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels. This will be especially critical at our preschool level.

Assessing student learning gaps or areas of need will be critical. Formative assessment before a unit of instruction to assess student understanding of pre-requisite skills will be common practice.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study.

### **Newfane Early Childhood Center**

#### **In-Person/Hybrid Model:**

The Pre-Kindergarten classrooms inside Newfane Early Childhood Center (NECC) are large enough to accommodate small groups of children which are further split into an a.m. and p.m. program. This has been the format since inception and will continue in the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, children's drawing tables will be outfitted with barriers so that children can learn to draw and write in a safe space for those activities. Teaching centers will be used by individual children and each child will have their own individual supply box for classroom materials to be used daily. At the early level, a big emphasis will be placed on teaching children proper hand washing, social distancing, use of masks and much more. Teachers will build time into the schedules to explicitly teach these important skills and concepts. The playground will be used though it will be on a class by class basis.

Children in both sections of the UPK program are provided a snack each day. The cafetorium will be used as a place for all children to eat with children seated at socially distant tables throughout the room. The notion of eating falls under the instruction portion because at the earliest level, we use this time to teach social skills, even though we will not enjoy a family style meal as we have in the past.

## **Remote Model:**

If we need to shift gears to a remote “at-home” format, children at NECC will already be entered into a Google Classroom digital platform. Children will need to be supported by their parents in terms of logging into the digital classroom and this will be done by communicating secure credentials with parents/guardians. The Google Classroom will be a place for teachers to include daily activities, videos and a rich set of lessons which parents will be able to do with their children. Google Classroom will also be a portal for parent-teacher communications. In addition, other communication systems will be used to enhance the home-school connection such as: the building website, Blackboard Connect Robocall/text/email system, district mobile app and general mailings via United States Postal Service (USPS) on occasion.

## **Special Education**

Our plan provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Special education programs and our services specifically provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students. While not all formats allow for maximum benefit to students, these programs and services can be provided in all formats (live-person, hybrid, or remote). We will continue to document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as to the communications with parents in their preferred language and mode of communication (eg. Related Services Log). The district will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

Our agency is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent’s preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of to ensure that they are engaged in their children’s education during the reopening process. Our agency continues to plan and support collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE)) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure 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.

Children with Special Needs will maintain records to document the implementation of each IEP. Documentation and tracking must be maintained on the instruction and services that were provided to each student so that these activities may be communicated to the Committee on Preschool Special Education for consideration when making an individualized determination as to whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed when schools return to regular functioning. The documentation will include, but will not be limited to: narrative records of how the student is adjusting to live, hybrid, and remote instruction during 2020-21, a record of what instruction and services were provided, a record of formative, summative, and standardized assessments and their results as well as progress monitoring documentation, a record of school-family collaboration, and the provision of compensatory services records.

Our agency continues to work closely with the CPSE committee to meet the needs of the identified children in our classroom.

## **Staffing**

### **Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching**

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

## **Glossary of Acronyms:**

CDC- Center for Disease Control

COHORT- a group of students who remain together throughout the day and throughout a course of study

NYSDOH or DOH- New York State Department of Health

NYSED or SED- New York State Education Department

PPE- Personal Protective Equipment

SFA- School Facilities Association

SWD- Students with Disabilities

UPK- Universal Pre-Kindergarten

USDA- United States Department of Agriculture

## Key References

- State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools (July 16, 2020)
- State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools (July 13, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health (July 13, 2020) Additional References
- Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- New York State Education Department Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website 25