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June 23, 2020

Dear Families/CSE chairs:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the first few days of summer. We are writing to provide you with our plans for reopening our in-person education program beginning on July 13th.

The attached document outlines the measures and protocols we have established to promote a safe return to our campus, for students, residents and staff. Our primary concern is, and has always been, the well-being of the children we serve and the staff who work with them every day. To that end, our established practices meet or exceed those guidelines provided by the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Our daily programming has been developed after considerable consultation with our oversight agencies, best practices research and input from staff and families. The success of our summer program also depends upon conscientious collaboration with all of you. We are asking for your support in our efforts to minimize risk for all by following our guidelines and practices.

In order to effectively plan for our opening week, we are asking that any families who are currently undecided about whether or not their child will attend school in-person this summer, please let us know no later than 12pm this Friday, June 26th of your decision. Please contact your child's social worker to let them know.

Summer is normally a relaxed time on our campus, allowing for more time with friends, animals and recreational activities. While we know this summer will look somewhat different than previous years, we are confident we can offer your children the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe and supportive environment and we are eager to welcome them back.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Placke".

Ed Placke, Ed.D.  
Executive Director  
[eplacke@greenchimneys.org](mailto:eplacke@greenchimneys.org)

## **Green Chimneys' Reopening Plan and Protocol**

On June 5, 2020, Governor Cuomo issued Executive Order 202.37, which provided that “notwithstanding any prior Executive Order to the contrary, special education services and instruction required under Federal, state or local laws, rules, or regulations, may be provided in person for the summer term in school districts. Any district providing such services in person must follow State and Federal guidelines.”

Special education services may be provided at locations not operated by a school district (e.g., 853 schools, 4201 schools, 4410 schools).

Services may be provided at independent schools under the following circumstances:

- A school district may request a student receive special education services at an independent school;
- An independent school that receives a request from a school district to serve a special education student pursuant to Executive Order 202.37 or its successor may provide such services; and
- If an independent school chooses to provide such special education services at the request of a school district, such independent school must adhere to all safety guidelines herein.

This interim advisory is provided by the Department of Health (DOH) to inform in-person special education services and instruction while helping to protect against the spread of COVID-19 as in-person education has been authorized for this specific purpose. Guidance is based on the best-known public health information and practices at the time of publication, and the documentation, data, and evidence upon which this guidance is based can and does frequently change. NYSDOH will revise and reissue this advisory as necessary. Green Chimneys will comply with all DOH guidelines.

### **Specific Procedures include:**

#### **Communication:**

- We will maintain direct communication with parents/guardians and local health authorities/oversight bodies including; NY State Education Department, the Office of Children and Family Services and our local Department of Health;
- In addition to regular communication with your child's social worker, communications with parents will go through School Messenger, email, and our website: <https://www.greenchimneys.org/therapeutic-special-education/parents-families/announcements/virus-update/>
- Additionally, we will maintain contact with your child's school district

**We believe that in-person instruction is the best option for learning and receiving related support services, however; we understand the individual needs and challenges of families and youth:**

- We will provide a remote learning option throughout the summer for those families/children who cannot or do not want to participate in in-person schooling
- All related services will also continue to be available in person or virtually

#### **Health and Safety Measures:**

- All children will be screened upon arrival to campus – this includes taking their temperature and a symptom check prior to entering the building.
- Daily screenings will take place in three designated, outdoor areas.
- Parents who drive their children are asked to contact the office, from their car, upon arrival and await a screening. Brewster students should be taken to the Gym parking lot and call 845.279.2995 Ext. 154. Clearpool students should pull up to the main gate and call the school nurse at 845.279.2995 Ext 610.
- All staff are required to wear masks and socially distance whenever possible;
- All students are encouraged to wear masks and will be made available to them as needed;
- Where appropriate, social distance markers will be in place.
- The number of handwashing and hand sanitation stations has been increased;
- Children will be encouraged to sanitize hands often and between any activities; child appropriate signage encouraging proper handwashing and sanitization will be posted.
- Our Dining hall will be closed; students will eat in the classroom or outside (with distancing in place.) Meals will individually packed, and we will continue to ensure compliance with food allergy plans.
- Staff will be assigned consistently to groups of students with minimal contact between groups – both staff and students.
- Child appropriate visual reminders for proper hygiene, covering coughs, and recognizing COVID symptoms are posted throughout our buildings.
- Information is provided and posted for staff *and* students on proper use, removal, and disposal/ or washing of cloth face coverings.
- Students will have activities outdoors as much as possible
- Disposable cups will be available at drinking fountain and with portable water stations outside.

#### **Cleaning and Disinfecting:**

- Green Chimneys has an extensive cleaning protocol which can be viewed on our website: : [www.greenchimneys.org/therapeutic-special-education/parents-families/announcements/virus-update/virus-health-procedure-faq/](http://www.greenchimneys.org/therapeutic-special-education/parents-families/announcements/virus-update/virus-health-procedure-faq/)

### **Educational programming and services:**

- All classrooms will have a total of no more than 10 students.
- All rooms have been measured and desks have been moved to be 6 feet apart; all desks will face in the same direction.
- Programs will be modified to allow for social distancing and there will be no mixing of groups;
- No afterschool programming or extracurricular activities will be offered during the summer session.
- Shared objects will be limited and frequently cleaned/disinfected; sharing of student's personal items will be prohibited. Staff in charge of the area will also be in sanitizing objects in that area regularly.
- Each student's belongings will be separated from others' in cubbies or lockers. Students will be discouraged from sharing electronic devices, books, and other games or learning aids.
- 3 separate arrival and drop off areas will be established to spread out staff and students during their arrival and allow for appropriate health screenings. Parents arriving with their child outside of the drop off times should remain in their cars with the student and call the school main office to say that you have arrived.
- Social Emotional learning is embedded throughout our curriculum and reinforced through related services to provide extra support to students through this challenging and uncertain period.

### **Staff protocols:**

- Employees have been trained on recognizing COVID symptoms and employee sick policies have been reinforced.
- Employees who do not work directly with children will remain working from home through the summer to decrease numbers on campus.
- We will remain closed to the public through the summer.
- All Green Chimneys employees will undergo daily health screenings and are instructed to stay home if they are sick. GC follows recommended DOH screening protocol which includes specific questions and a temperature check. Before employees report to their work site/office/classroom each day, they are asked about (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive diagnostic COVID-19 test in 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Staff who have any symptoms, possible/positive exposure or a fever in excess of 99.9 degrees will immediately be sent home and remain out of work for the recommend quarantine period.
- Staff members who are unable to access diagnostic testing in a reasonable time frame may be tested at our HC.
- Screenings will be done outdoors (whenever possible) in designated areas.

- Personnel performing screening activities will have access to PPE and training by medical staff on screening questions and protocols.
- A master schedule accounting for all staff on campus has been created and is updated ensure appropriate, reliable and quick tracing.
- Staff absenteeism is closely monitored to identify any trends/concerns; GC maintains a roster of staff who are trained to work with children in varying capacities should coverage be necessary for staff who are ill.
- Health Center staff are available 24 hours daily and will be contacted immediately for any symptoms in students and staff so isolation protocol can begin.
- Any deliveries to the campus are received in a single, controlled area and a log of such deliveries is maintained; no contact with students will take place.
- No one is permitted to enter the HC prior to receiving a full screening.
- Because of the traumatic nature of the pandemic and the associated changes to previous activities/structure, GC is providing enhanced training to all staff in trauma and positive behavior interventions.

#### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:**

- Parents are being asked to have their day students tested for COVID-19 prior to the first day of in-person school and to submit those results to our health center. Residential students are tested at GC upon their return to campus.
- Parents are required to screen their child *EACH MORNING* for symptoms and/or fever. Students who have had contact with a COVID positive person should follow DOH recommendations for quarantine and not come to school (A daily reminder will be sent to all families).
- Parents will be asked to immediately pick up a student who is showing symptoms or develops a fever.
- Parents are asked to adhere to our student sick policy and students should not return to school until they are at least 72 hours symptom and fever-free (without fever-reducing medications).
- Parents are asked to ensure items taken home from school are disinfected regularly.
- Parents are asked to comply with GC policies, DOH guidelines and cooperate with contact tracing.
- In addition to our current sick policy, we are asking parents to keep their child home if someone else in the household is showing viral symptoms or has been tested for COVID.

#### **COVID Positive Cases:**

- Any staff or student who have been in contact with a COVID positive individual within 48 hours prior to the onset symptoms should be tested. If the person was asymptomatic, all persons who had contact with the individual 48 prior to their positive test result should be tested. Staff who have had prolonged contact should remain out of work pending results
- Department directors are responsible for contact tracing (using departmental information as well as information obtained from our master schedule) and notify any staff who may have

been exposed. Staff with potential, extended exposure will be asked to be tested. Health Center Staff will notify any families of potential exposure. Residential students may be tested on site at our health center.

- Per current policy, positive students or residents will need to return home and not return to campus until the DOH required time frame for quarantine has passed.
- Should a child show symptoms/fever and need to wait on campus until a parent/guardian arrives, Isolation protocol will be put into place and includes full PPE for staff members monitoring/caring for the child/student.
- All staff will be made aware of any positive cases through an update by Dr. Placke.
- All families will be made aware of positive cases through a memo from the Health Center. Families whose child may have been exposed will be contacted directly by a Health Center staff member.
- Green Chimneys will seek and utilize additional guidance from our local Department of Health should positive cases occur on our campus.
- ***Areas or the entire school may have to close following a confirmed case of COVID, the length of closure will be determined after consultation with the DOH.*** Families will be notified of any closure through school messenger. Day students are not to report to school. Residential students may be picked up or quarantine with their respective dorm.
- Should a temporary school closure be necessary, students would start the following day receiving remote education and services.
- Students and staff are required to cooperate with contact tracing efforts while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

#### **Additional Information for Residential Students:**

- Residential students will be tested in the HC according to our current procedure.
- Residential students should be picked up if they are experiencing symptoms or have a positive COVID test. They can return following DOH guidance.
- Visiting Plans will be established for families of residential students and a separate letter and schedule has been sent to residential families.

#### **Additional Resources:**

- NYS DOH Website: <https://www.health.ny.gov/>
- NYS Department of Education Website: <http://www.nysed.gov/>
- OCFS Website: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/>
- CDC COVID-19 Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/>