

November 19, 2020

Dear Green Chimneys Residential Families,

As we head into the holiday and cold weather season, we would like to thank our families for their diligent efforts to keep Green Chimneys open and safe. We have provided in person instruction at Green Chimneys since July and we have experienced relatively few COVID events. Our goal is to continue to keep all children and staff safe and healthy.

Recent data have shown increases in positive COVID cases across the country, including the Tri-state area. Due to this increase in our community, many towns in Putnam County are at risk for transitioning to a yellow zone within the next week.* The New York State Department of Health has determined that schools open to in-person instruction in yellow zones are required to randomly test 20% of in-person students, teachers and staff, over a two-week period. If our positivity rate falls below the county's rate, we can stop testing.

We would like to remain open for in-person instruction for all our students, so are encouraging everyone to do what they can to minimize risk and commit to remaining safe and healthy. To meet this goal, we are asking staff, students, and families to follow all known safety precautions as recommended by New York State and our local Departments of Health.

As a reminder, please be sure to let your child's social worker know if you plan to travel out of state, keep your child home if they are feeling ill, and continue to advise of possible exposure in the community. If your home community is in a red or orange zone, your child will be isolated and tested after visits. This guideline applies to both our New York and Connecticut students.

If our area becomes designated an orange or red zone, per New York State guidelines, we will suspend in-person instruction and switch to remote instruction. Residential students should remain on campus and be educated within their dorm cohorts. We will suspend all on-campus visitation, but your child can still go home for planned home visits.

All residential students will be tested upon return from the two upcoming holiday breaks. No additional consent is needed for the testing of residential students.

Our hope is that by following safe practices in our own homes and workplaces, we can continue to keep our community healthy and remain open for in-person learning. We appreciate your patience and collaboration as we all work together to continue to provide good treatment and learning for your children.

For more information on the Cluster Action Initiative, please visit:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-new-cluster-action-initiative>

As always all updated information can be found on our website under the school reopening plan at:

<https://www.greenchimneys.org/therapeutic-special-education/parents-families/announcements/school-reopening-plan>

Sincerely,



Ed Placke, Ed.D.
Executive Director

* On October 6, 2020, Governor Cuomo implemented a new cluster action initiative to address COVID-19 hot spots that have cropped up. This science-based approach will focus on addressing these clusters and aims to prevent further transmission of the virus, and includes new rules and restrictions directly targeted to areas with the highest concentration of COVID-19 cases and surrounding communities. The initiative divides clusters and the areas around them into three categories – the cluster itself (red zone), a warning zone (orange zone), and a precautionary zone (yellow zone).