

School Re- Opening Plan

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Program Site Addresses: Harrison Children’s Center, 251 Underhill Ave West Harrison, NY 10604 AND Bright Beginnings Preschool, 1974 Commerce St Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Program(s) provided at this site: 4410 Preschool Special Education, Special Class in an Integrated Setting (SCIS)

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Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted: www.theracare.com

INTRODUCTION

This plan was developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their August 2021 document entitled: *Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year*. This plan will be revised and updated as needed to adjust to changing public health conditions caused by the COVID-19 virus and all the new requirements and regulations which may emerge over time. This plan is to provide schools with the support needed to start the school year and sustain the educational process in a manner that serves all students and supports their return to in-person learning. Feedback was elicited from families and our staff

during the original drafting of our re-opening plan (July 2020). We will continue to collaborate with all stakeholders as we implement this plan and as we consider any additions or modifications. Please note that this plan is subject to change at any time based on continually changing guidelines and regulations.

We know our program must be as flexible and as responsive as possible to the needs of our students, families, and staff members. We will closely monitor the conditions of our community as the COVID 19 pandemic continues and the effectiveness and appropriateness of our plan. We continue to be committed to providing the highest possible quality of educational programming and related services.

The goal of the plan is to guide the delivery of high quality educational services as safely as possible whether that service delivery is in-person, through a remote learning approach or a balanced combination of remote and in-person services. This plan describes a range of strategies that schools might consider to best manage the needs of students and staff during COVID 19 while supporting and engaging educational opportunities for students. Our focus and concerns extend to the social and emotional needs of our students, families, and staff members. By diligently working together and remaining focused on the outcomes we desire, we can find solutions to the many challenges ahead.

Our plan is based on the guidance from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, New York State Education Department (NYSED), and New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). Our plan includes all the required elements identified by CDC and follows the structure of the guidance by addressing the following areas as they apply to our students and their families.

- Promoting vaccination
- Consistent and correct use of masks
- Physical distancing
- Screening testing to quickly identify cases
- Improved ventilation
- Proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Routine cleaning and disinfection

Any suggestions, concerns, and/or questions about our plan should be directed to the contact person identified at the beginning of this document.

At Harrison Children’s Center/Bright Beginnings, the health and safety of our students, families and staff are our priority. We are dedicated to maximizing in-person learning while managing the risks of COVID-19 and its variants.

Communication and family engagement will be important as we strive to keep everyone informed of protocols for ensuring the safety and continued educational development of our students, as well as the health and safety of our staff. We expect families to make good decisions to minimize their exposure to COVID-19.

Ongoing communication regarding the plan or other pertinent information regarding COVID-19 precautions or changes to instruction will be communicated to families and staff through our school-wide communication system, Remini parent portal and emails. Secure log in information is provided to all staff and families prior to the start of school. Parents and staff are encouraged to direct any questions or concerns to either Director of Harrison Children’s Center, Karla Franco hcckarla@gmail.com, Director of Bright Beginnings, Ms. Vera Correa brightbegin@verizon.net, or TheraCare Clinical Supervisor, Cortni Wilson cortniwilson@theracare.com.

PROMOTING VACCINATION

The CDC states that “vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end COVID-19. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities.” Our schools serve the most vulnerable population of children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this current time. It is important and strongly encouraged for teachers, staff, and therapists get vaccinated.

Our administrators will verify vaccinations and maintain documentation of staff members COVID-19 vaccination status to inform prevention strategies, contact tracing efforts, and quarantine and isolation practices and protocols. This secure protocol will comply with all regulatory requirements, laws, and regulations.

Our school will closely monitor the level of COVID-19 transmission in our school and home community. We will consult with local health officials to track community transmission, vaccination coverage, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide our decisions with preventative strategies.

According to CDC, Individuals who are fully vaccinated can refrain from quarantine following a known exposure with someone who had COVID-19 if they are asymptomatic. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after exposure even if they do not have symptoms.

All safety protocols including mask wearing, washing hands, and socially distancing should continue.

WEARING MASKS

The CDC recently updated their guidance (August 2021) on indoor mask wearing based on the Delta variant of COVID-19 in K-12 schools for teachers, students, and staff. This strain is more infectious and has led to increase transmission even in vaccinated individuals. Based on CDC guidance, American Academy of Pediatrics, and NYS Department of Health (August 27, 2021, mask guidance P-12 schools), Our school will adhere to universal mask requirement indoors throughout the day for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors in P-12 schools regardless of vaccination status and community transmission levels. Universal masking indoors at schools are required for teachers, staff, students, and visitors over the age of two and who are able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask to the greatest extent possible for their safety. Students will also be given mask breaks when needed. We will practice consistent and correct mask use (covering nose and mouth) to protect all individuals. Our students who are transported on buses will wear a mask on school buses and follow DOH transportation guidelines. Our school will have a sufficient supply of masks for students and staff if needed, in addition to disposable gloves. Staff have been trained via CDC webinar on the safe and removal and disposal of gloves and masks.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND COHORTING

Based on CDC recommendation, our schools will maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. To facilitate social physical distance, our schools have implemented cohorts. Cohorts are used to limit the number of students, teachers and staff who come in contact with each other when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing such as among young students. Each student will remain with their own class of no more than 15 students. Staff will remain consistent in their classroom. Classrooms have been reconfigured to promote spaces between play areas and children. There will be a limited number of students allowed in small areas, such as housekeeping and book areas. Students will have their designated spot on the rug for circle time and eating lunch at their assigned tables in their classroom. Students will go to the bathroom in small groups. One cohort/classroom at a time on the playground. Our schools have implemented staggered drop off and pick up schedules with DOH transportation. We will keep students and staff in their own cohorts for the school day.

Extracurricular activities (music, soccer) provide students with enrichment opportunities and can help students learn and achieve their social and emotional needs. These activities will resume in September and will be monitored. Students will refrain from these activities when they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and should be tested. Staff and teachers should continue to

follow all safety protocols and keep physical distancing to the greatest extent possible in various settings.

Transportation for students with disabilities enrolled in 4410 programs are provided by the school district. Students will be taken off the bus by their own classroom teacher and transition to their classroom to keep the integrity of the cohort.

COVID-19 SCREENING TESTING

Our schools will not conduct testing for staff or students. In the event that a student or staff member becomes ill while at school, it is within the right of the school to send the person home for the day. Staff members are required to inform a Supervisor if they develop symptoms during the school day. Students and school personnel should stay home if they are showing any signs and symptoms of infectious illness, including COVID-19 and get tested.

Although temperature screenings and questionnaires are no longer required from CDC based on their recent guidance (August 2021), our schools will continue to implement the above and be proactive to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Parents/guardians are encouraged to screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to student attending school each day. Daily temperature checks and screenings will be conducted for staff and students. These screenings will be performed daily by the parent (on paper or online) in order for the student to attend school. Parents are expected to complete a daily screening questionnaire and daily temperature check prior to child boarding the bus for school. Temperature will be taken again when the child arrives at school. These screenings will be collected by the Director of the school. If any person (student, staff, visitor) answer “yes” they will not be granted admittance to the building. If the form is not filled out or completed, the student will wait in the designated isolation area while parent is contacted to send the form. Student will not be allowed into the classroom without screening form.

The health and safety of the students and staff in our schools is paramount. Health and safety considerations must always come first in every decision made and every action taken by our schools and districts.

IMPROVED VENTILATION

In all classrooms and therapy rooms windows will be open whenever possible to improve air circulation. In addition, each classroom and therapy room has a portable air filtration system. During bus transportation, windows can be open/cracked on buses to improve air flow and circulation.

PROPER HANDWASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Students will be instructed to cover coughs and sneezes to help reduce the spread. Staff and teachers will model and reinforce good etiquette in school by prompting frequent hand washing

and assist young students with handwashing. Students will wash their hands upon arrival, after playing in the gym or playground, after using the bathroom, before and after snacks/meals and any time they have dirty hands. Each classroom follows same protocol of hand washing procedures for consistency. When handwashing isn't possible, we will provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol for all adults and students who can safely use it. Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the school. Proper signage as per CDC will be posted throughout the school. Social stories, modeling and visuals will also be used to enhance students understanding and compliance to these protocols.

STAYING HOME WHEN SICK AND GETTING TESTED

Students and staff must stay home if they are showing signs and symptoms of infectious illness, including COVID-19 and get tested. Parents will screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to their child attending school each day. **If a parent responds “yes” to any of the questions the parents may not send their child to school until they can answer “no” to all of the questions and they have been cleared by their physician.** If the child has a temperature of 100* or higher, whether or not accompanied by COVID-19 symptoms, the parents may not send their child to school without a note from the doctor clearing child to return. Same with staff members, they will need a note from their physician before returning to work.

Children should not be sent to school if they present with signs of illness, such as:

- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- **Fatigue**
- **Muscle or body aches**
- **Headache**
- **New loss of taste or smell**
- **Sore throat**
- **Congestion or runny nose**
- **Nausea or vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

If a parent fails to complete the daily screening, the students will not be permitted to enter the school until the parent completes the questionnaire and responses to the questions meet criteria for entry to school. If the parent sends their child to school despite responding “yes” to any of the questions, or having a temperature of 100* or higher, the student will not be admitted to school and the parent will be called to pick up their child immediately. The student will be accompanied by school personnel while they wait in the designated area.

If the child is sent to school presenting with signs of illness as described above it is within the right of the school to send the child home for the day until the child is symptom free. This same procedure applies for all staff including therapists and visitors. The CDC flowchart to assists

schools in decision making if a student becomes sick or reports a new COVID-19 diagnosis has been shared with all staff and parents.

CONTACT TRACING IN COMBINATION WITH ISOLATION/QUARANTINE

Any student who becomes ill with COVID with COVID-19 symptoms while at school will be sent to the designated isolation area (Director of school), where they will be monitored by the school director. It is expected that parents will pick up an ill child immediately. The director will escort the student out of the building when their parent arrives to pick him/her up and inform the parent that they must follow up with the child's doctor immediately. The designated isolation area will be kept off limits from others once the student is picked up. The area will be disinfected as well as thoroughly disinfecting other areas of the building where the student was. In the event of severe life threatening symptoms, the director will call 911, informing the operator that the student may have COVID-19. The director will accompany the student in the ambulance or if not permitted, will follow ambulance and remain with child until parent arrives at the hospital.

If the student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the child's parents must inform the director immediately. If a staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, they must notify the director immediately. The Director would notify Department of Health and Office of Child and Family Services and follow their directives regarding any necessary protocols and cooperate with any contact tracing efforts.

If we become aware that any student or staff member has come in contact and directly exposed with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19, that student's parent and/or the staff member will be notified and given instructions for possible quarantine/isolation and or testing procedures.

If there is one documented confirmed case of COVID-19 in a class (either staff or student), all families in the school will be notified of the case (without naming the individual). Director will ensure information is shared with DOH/OCFS. If cohort has been maintained, they must close for the required quarantine period (per DOH/OCFS regulations). If the cohorts have not been maintained, all classes may need to close for the required quarantine period. For confirmed COVID-19 cases, staff members and students must remain at home until they receive written clearance from their physician and DOH to return to school. Remote virtual instruction/distance learning will be offered during the quarantine period. All teachers and therapists have experience with both the in-person and remote instruction models. Therapy will be provided via Tele-therapy according to the IEP mandates. Teachers will do group/individual Zoom with students in their class. Hybrid learning will be offered for those children who are not able to come to school because their families are self-quarantining but they are well enough to participate. There will be opportunities to join school activities virtually. Teachers can offer for home students to participate virtually in small/large group instruction times with at school peers via Zoom. Our

school will work with students and families to offer remote options if it is clinically appropriate for the student.

ROUTINE CLEANING WITH DISINFECTION

Teachers will sanitize toys after use by student. Each student has their own materials (markers, scissors, etc.) kept in a pencil box in their cubby. All areas of the building that are being used will be cleaned daily on a schedule. School will be cleaned with and disinfected using all approved CDC/OCFS products that kill COVID-19. Cleanings will be documented. Teachers will clean all materials and surfaces that students touch. Students will be discouraged from holding/shaking hands, giving high fives and other actions that involve touching each other's hands. Teachers will replace these actions with other actions that allow students to safely connect with peers.

FOOD

At this time, Harrison Children's Center will be able to provide breakfast only to students. Families will need to send lunches and two snacks for their children at both of our schools. The children will eat lunch in their classroom with their cohort at their assigned table.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In addition to physical well-being, students need to feel safe and cared for in order to learn. This is facilitated through establishing predictable routines, clear expectations, visuals and lots of reassurance and positive reinforcement. We teach social skills, emotional regulation and emotional literacy. Our school participates in PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports). This is a multi-tiered system that supports student's social emotional and behavioral well-being. PBIS is a flexible and individualized system that meet the changing needs of all students. Our motto is "Be Safe, be Kind, Be Your Best!"

Reopening Plan Staff/Parent/Guardian Attestation

By signing below I am attesting to the fact that I have read the TheraCare/Harrison Children's Center/Bright Beginnings Reopening Plan and agree to abide by it in its entirety.

Name: _____

Role (Please Circle One): **Staff** **Parent** **Guardian** **Other**

If parent, please indicate the first and last name of your child(ren) below:

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____