The New York Institute for Special Education  
COVID—19 Plan  

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) virus, and we are learning more about it every day. There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. At this point, the best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes it. Identifying possible cases and stopping transmission (spread) of the virus through everyday practices is the best way to keep people healthy.

This plan was created to minimize risk of exposure to the staff and students, to assist in making good choices and to help reduce the possible spread of infection.

Housekeeping and Facilities are continuing to thoroughly clean the campus. They are focusing special attention on door knobs, handrails, elevator buttons and bathroom areas. Additional cleaning of these areas was added to the schedule for the staff.

Our vendors are providing supplies to help maintain clean and sanitary conditions for the students and staff.

The CDC, NYS Department of Health and the NYS Department of Education have shared guidelines for schools (PreK – 12) to follow. The New York Institute is following the guidelines and this plan will be updated as necessary.

Stay home when sick.

Students or staff with illness should stay home. If the student or staff member has a fever they should stay home and once the fever has passed can return to work after 24 hours.

Stay home from work, school, and errands if you do not feel well or are exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness. Personnel who develop respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, fever) are not to report to work. CDC also recommends to stay home if someone in the household is sick.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way
Cover coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes, then dispose the tissue. When a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow. Additionally, staff members who serve as sighted guides are not to cough into the elbow of the arm that is offered as a guide. Students often prefer on arm when being guided but using only the arm you might sneeze or cough into should be used.

Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work, or school, especially when someone is ill. If you need wipes or sanitizing materials, you should contact Housekeeping/Facilities. For student using a white cane, please help them wipe down the grip of the cane and the surfaces where they fold their cane. Each staff member and student should wipe off their ID badge.

Avoid sharing items when possible. If unable to avoid sharing material or equipment, disinfect between users.

Wash hands for at least 20 seconds. Washing hands often under clean, running water can help prevent the spread of germs. If not able to wash your hands, use hand sanitizer provided.

Maintain a distance of at least 3 feet between yourself and others. When greeting visitors avoid shaking hands.

Sharing Information

School closings that are the result of coronavirus or any other illness will be communicated to staff and parents through the school's phone message and on the NYISE website www.nyise.org

If there is a COVID-19 case related to NYISE the school will be contacted by the State Health Department in consultation with the local health department. Quarantine, restricted movement and monitoring will only be directed by the local department of health at the direction of the State Health Department.

Staff and Student Absence Notifications:

- Staff will continue to use pre-established routine systems for informing of need to be absent from school/work.
- Families are expected to call Health Services (718-519-7000 ext. 540) if their child’s absence is related to respiratory symptoms, or if anyone in the household is exhibiting signs of respiratory illness, or if anyone living in the household traveled to or from any of the CDC Traveler Health Locations.
• Staff is expected to make HR aware if absence is related to respiratory symptoms, if anyone in the household is exhibiting signs of respiratory illness, or if anyone living in the household traveled to or from any of the CDC Traveler Health Locations. Call HR at extension 718-519-7000 ext. 316
• Parents, families and students will continue to use pre-established systems for communicating absence from school
• When a student is ill at school due to respiratory symptoms, they will be directed to contact their primary care provider, and have the student stay home until well.
• The principals and supervisors will log and share with the Executive Director and Health Services on a daily basis reported information on student and staff absences. Absences in departments will be reviewed.
• The existing absenteeism patterns among both students and staff will be reviewed and used as a baseline for determining increases in absence.
• The Health Services Coordinator will alert the NYISE Medical Director about large increases in student and staff absenteeism, particularly if absences appear due to respiratory illness (e.g., common cold or influenza which have symptoms similar to symptoms of COVID-19)
• When a student or staff member attended school prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case, New York State Department of Health requires an initial 24 hour closure to clean and disinfect the school buildings where a student or staff had contact prior to testing positive for COVID-19.
• If a student or staff member has been identified as testing positive for COVID-19, the Institute will notify state health officials to determine what additional steps are needed.
• Students and staff who are well but are taking care of, or share a home with, someone with a case of COVID-19 must not attend school and must follow precautionary quarantine instructions from State health officials, who will determine when it is safe for them to return to school.
**Attendance and Sick Leave Policies:**
- Students and staff will be expected to stay home when sick.
- Absences resulting from respiratory illness will not reflect negatively on the employee’s work record and will not be subject to disciplinary action during the period of state of emergency or a CDC health alert.
- Absences resulting from respiratory illness will not reflect negatively on the student’s attendance.

**Field Trips, Staff Travel, Events and Large Gatherings:**
- Field Trips will be looked at on a case by case basis. At the current time off campus trips will not be approved. This will be reviewed as new information is received. This includes tournaments and other large group events.
- Requests for staff travel for conferences or other school related business will be carefully reviewed before determining approval or non-approval.

**Travel restrictions for staff are as follows:**
- Any staff member or student who has traveled internationally including a CDC-restricted locations (e.g. currently China, Italy, Iran, Japan, South Korea – to include airport layovers) is subject to a minimum 14-day waiting period before returning to work. Please note that should any country be added to the CDC travel restriction list while staff members are present in that country or were recently in the country, they will be subject to the minimum 14-day waiting period.
- Any staff member or student who has come into contact with a confirmed positive COVID-19 patient is subject to a minimum 14-day waiting period before returning to work.

**H. Disruption to Programs and Services:**
- We will work with the NYC Department of Health and the NYS Department of Education in following their guidance regarding opening and closing of school.
- In anticipation of disruption of services, Schermerhorn and Van Cleve teachers will prepare student lessons that can be completed at home either using Google Classroom or hard copies of lessons to be sent home. The Readiness teachers should prepare a list of activities that the families can do with their children while at home.
- Student and staff absenteeism will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine if alternate plans for instruction are required.
• In the event the school is determined to be in a state of emergency, the following are considered critical functions that must have adequate staff coverage until students can be picked up: direct care to students, nursing services, security and facilities.
• In the event that critical functions cannot be covered, consideration will be given to closing the school

When Students or Staff Arrive to School Sick or Become Sick at School:
• Staff who present with respiratory illness symptoms at any time during their shift will be sent home. The expectation is that they leave immediately.
• Students at school who present with symptoms of respiratory illness will be sent home. As soon as the symptoms are identified, parents will be contacted to pick up their son or daughter from school. The expectation is that parents have transportation plans in place that allow them to respond to this communication immediately. A student exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness will not be permitted to ride the bus home from school.
• Sick students as well as staff who become too ill to get themselves home will be kept in Wait House until they can leave campus.
• Health Services will be used for well student visits; e.g., medication administration, non-COVID-19 medical issues. 911 will be called for students or staff exhibiting signs of respiratory distress
• Students who have been absent from school due to symptoms of respiratory illness will be required to provide clearance from a medical professional to return to school.
• Sick employees with a cold are recommended to stay home 1 to 2 days. NYISE has the right to ask for a return to work letter.

Cleaning:
• Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, countertops, faucets, hand rails, door pushes, etc.) will be cleaned 3 times a day with the cleaning agents identified as being effective against Coronavirus.
• Disposable wipes will be made available to staff with the expectation that commonly used surfaces (e.g. tables, keyboards, desks, phones, etc.) are wiped down before use.
• Additional cleaning and disinfecting by housekeeping personnel will be performed in areas occupied by individuals known to have symptoms of respiratory illness.

Communication Plan:
• Coronavirus plan and updates will be shared through the NYISE website, email etc.
• In situations where more urgent communication in necessary, the School Messenger App will be used to disseminate information.
• Reminders will be sent to families to keep children with signs of respiratory illness (cough, fever or shortness of breath) home.
• Reminders to employ best hygiene practices will be provided to staff and families.

Meal Needs
• Fun Day and other large events having food will serve box/bag lunches. All items will be individually wrapped. Staff should supervise students and discourage food sharing or sharing of water bottles and other drinks.