Cedarhurst School Reopening Plan

Summary

Updated 8/17/2020

Cedarhurst School adopted a fully remote distance learning model in March through June of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. School administrators have developed a plan for the 2020-2021 academic year, which begins September 8th, to provide a high-quality education to Cedarhurst students during the pandemic, with an intense focus on student and staff safety.

Three Models of Instruction

The plan for the upcoming year includes three potential models of instruction:

- **Fully In-person**: School is fully open onsite with traditional instruction in-person for all students.
- **Fully Remote**: All students engage in remote distance learning. Educational instruction, individual counseling and therapeutic groups are delivered via Zoom and Google Classroom. A fully remote educational experience will be provided to the student of any parents who choose to keep their child at home because of the pandemic.
- **Hybrid Learning**: Students spend two days per week in onsite classes and two days per week learning remotely through live access to their classroom. On the fifth day (Wednesdays) all students participate in remote individual and group instruction and tutoring.

The Cedarhurst School will open using the Fully Remote Model briefly, followed by a staggered shift to the Hybrid Model for each of the four existing cohorts in the school: the Middle School, High school, Passage Program, ND School Engagement Program.

The school will be prepared to shift to the other models, if indicated, as the school year unfolds and the pandemic evolves. The decision about which model to use at any point in time will be informed by the following factors: student needs; direction from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE); guidance from federal agencies and relevant scientific and professional bodies; Yale University policies and procedures; consultation with relevant experts at Yale; a review of best practices nationally; current data on the pandemic levels in Connecticut; input from staff and parents; and benchmarking with other schools in Connecticut.
**The Schedule**

All staff will participate in orientation remotely on September 1st and 2nd and in the school building on September 3rd and 4th. On September 8th all educational programs will start with Fully Remote instruction (staff and students at home.) The staff and students from each program will transition to the Hybrid Model on the following schedule:

- **Passage Program** - students return September 17th
- **Middle School** - students return on September 24th
- **High School** - students return on October 22nd
- **School Engagement Program** - students return October 29th

**Three Priorities**

All learning models emphasize three major priorities: (1) The health and safety of students and staff; (2) the quality of education; and (3) the provision of therapeutic support. Below are some of the many strategies that are being adopted to achieve these priorities.

**Health & Safety**

- Development of comprehensive safety policies and procedures
- Education of students, parents and staff in all safety protocols
- Adherence to CSDE guidance and recommendations for working with "high need" students during the pandemic and training for staff in this work
- Ongoing consultation with Yale experts on infection control and environmental safety
- Engagement of a master's degree nurse to advise the school's administration on infection control practices and management
- Daily health checks of staff and students prior to school entry
- Temperature screening at the door
- Restriction on visitors in the school building
- Masks and hand sanitizer provided to all students
- Face shields, disposable gloves, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes provided to all staff
- Use of face coverings by all students and staff in the building, with mask breaks occurring individually as needed
- Increased social distancing facilitated by furniture removal, desk placement and adjusting the number of individuals in each room
- Use of outdoor space with canopies for classes and groups
• All staff meetings and student Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings conducted via Zoom
• Adoption of selected strategies to improve ventilation in the building
• Designated isolation room for students who develop symptoms while at school and are awaiting transport home
• Utilization of Yale Health COVID-19 Resource Line for guidance on staff self-quarantine and testing
• Contact tracing program conducted in consultation with public health experts
• Adoption of standards regarding return to the school building by students or staff who have had symptoms, suspected COVID-19 or a COVID-19 diagnosis.
• Cleaning contractor providing one of its staff onsite during the school day for ongoing cleaning
• Deep cleaning of the school twice per week
• Specialized cleaning protocols, including deep cleaning and the use of Yale-approved cleaning products

Quality of Education

• Curricula specifically tailored within each of the three learning models to meet Connecticut Core Standards for education
• Curricula and instruction adjusted within each model to maximize student engagement
• Emphasis on individualized instruction to meet the needs of all learners, with a particular focus on strategies for effective remote teaching and learning
• Use of Google Classroom, Zoom and other software to strengthen and support the learning experience
• Ongoing professional development for staff in instructional methods and best practices specific to remote learning and hybrid teaching
• Installation and upgrades of audio and video technology in every classroom to facilitate class participation of remote learners
• Orientation of staff and students to the new technology
• Individual Chromebooks provided to each student for use in the classroom and, if necessary, at home
• Academic advisors focusing on student development of skills necessary for remote and hybrid learning
• Routine communication with parents focused on pandemic-related information and problem-solving and support of their child's learning in each of the three instructional models
• Increased collaboration with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to coordinate services, shifts between learning models, and individual academic concerns during the pandemic

**Therapeutic Supports**

• Coaching of students in adherence to health and safety protocols and practices in the school building and the community
• Weekly individual and group therapy for each student, with an emphasis on wellness and health during the pandemic.
• Increased intensity of support as needed
• Ongoing safety assessments of students, with a focus on challenges related to the pandemic and learning from home
• Frequent communication with families and caregivers about the emotional and behavioral needs of students
• Guidance to families on providing adequate structure and an optimal home environment for remote learning
• Support and referral of parents and caregivers who are struggling because of the pandemic
• Applying a trauma-informed lens to all work with students and their families
• Data collection tailored to each learning model to assess school effectiveness and enable data-based decision-making
• A formal system for identifying and providing a three-tiered program of supports to students struggling with engagement and attendance

**For Further Information**

For further information about Cedarhurst School and its reopening plan please contact one of the following individuals: Michael Hoge, Ph.D., Superintendent of Cedarhurst and Professor of Psychiatry (Michael.hoge@yale.edu); Betsy Donovan, Director of Cedarhurst (betsy.donovan@yale.edu); or Kitty Clemens, Associate Director of Cedarhurst (kitty.clemens@yale.edu).