



CLASSROOM CONNECTION DAY SCHOOL

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August 14, 2020

Dear CCDS Families and Districts:

Our Admin team continues to plan for the start of the 2020 school year with multiple learning models. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, we announced that:

- Full In-person Learning had been ruled out because it was not possible to provide adequate social distancing as required by health authorities AND
- A Blended Learning model with ½ day In-person Learning (daily) and ½ day Remote Learning (asynchronous) was announced to begin on September 8<sup>th</sup>; AND
- A Full Remote Learning model (albeit with more structure than the last version) would also begin on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Blended Learning model was chosen with the assumption that 50% or fewer students would be in person at any given time allowing us to assign each student their own individual room and personal supplies. The teachers and therapists would rotate into the students' rooms keeping the hallways clear and everyone socially distanced as best as possible. Also key to assigning the students their own space is that many of our students have mask restrictions such that social distancing of at least 6 feet is a MUST. At that time, each student's parents selected either the Blended model (10 students) or the Full Remote model (7 students). We intended to limit occupancy to 30 people or less.

There are key challenges that are leading us to pull back from the Blended Learning model. Illinois has a concerning COVID-19 trend right now. We have inventoried the majority of local school districts, as well as your home districts, and most are starting with Full Remote Learning. We are having difficulty securing and installing all of the necessary PPE and sanitation supplies as many are quite limited in availability. We are aware that some students may not be able to sustain mask use and may have difficulty with social distancing. Additionally, we are experiencing significant loss of staff corresponding with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act and staff who are unable to report to work due to issues related to Covid19. Finally, although our numbers are small, the nature of our school brings together students and staff from at least 4 regions and 6 counties (including Lake/McHenry/Suburban Cook/Will/DuPage/and Chicago proper) complicating our exposure. We are also learning that children can carry the virus and though not as likely to impact children some cases have been significant even fatal.

Each Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health publishes the regional and county metrics. As of Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, the number of cases of COVID19 in Region 9 (Lake/McHenry County) and Region 10 (Suburban Cook County) have shown a steady increase at WARNING levels for the last 3 weeks (Lake=76/100K; McHenry=80/100K; and Suburban Cook=67/100K) well beyond the target of 50/100K. This has resulted in a 15/30 day increase in positivity which has recently gone from 3.4% to (Lake=5.5%;

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McHenry=4.7%; and Suburban Cook=5.8%). The World Health Organization recommends that schools reopen for in-person learning only when positivity is below 5%.

We all want students to return to the building, but we trust that the safety of your children as well as our staff is the highest concern. Right now, delivering the Blended Learning model we had hoped to begin in September doesn't make sense. We have watched national trends of opening up too quickly; not doing adequate training for handwashing, masks, and social distancing resulting in full shutdown. We believe that opening the school more slowly will allow us to open up when the numbers are down (stable or declining) and allow us to perform contact tracing.

**THEREFORE, WE INTEND TO START ALL STUDENTS WITH FULL REMOTE LEARNING ON 8/31/20. WE WILL WATCH THE WEEKLY METRICS AND ONCE A POSITIVITY RATE OF LESS THAN 5% IS MAINTAINED FOR AT LEAST 14 DAYS, WE WILL CONSIDER IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION.**

We have attached a summary of the three instructional models as well as the criteria for mitigation developed for CCDS. Given the changing status of the pandemic; and evolving health and educational guidance, schools must plan to implement a "continuum" of potential instructional models during the 2020/2021 school year, and be able to quickly pivot to any one of the models based on the most recent scientific data and educational guidance.

During the interim, staff will be working the weeks of August 17<sup>th</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup> and retool Remote Learning. We plan to postpone the In-Person (Blended Model) Orientation that we had planned for the week of the 31<sup>st</sup> and instead start Remote Learning earlier. Before we return to our retooled In-person learning model, we will likely need 1-2 days of Orientation to train on all of the revised policy and procedure, thus the calendar will need modification again at that time.

We want you to know that Remote learning WILL NOT be the model we used in the Spring/Summer. We brought our A-game but now we're bringing our A+ game. For example, each student's schedule will be more structured. Asynchronous learning will be more individualized. Also, during this time approximately 50% of our staff will work from the building and 50% will work remotely; this will allow our paras to be more involved during Remote Learning 2.0 to offer more classes. After we have developed a more specific and structured remote learning plan, we will send you all the details. Each student will also have an individualized remote learning plan.

We have some exciting staff changes to announce. Tom Osman has taken a position at another school and we wish him luck in his new endeavors! Edyta Debkowska has joined our team as a case manager. Edyta has her LBSI from Northeastern University. She also has her Master's Degree in English as a Foreign Language and English Literature. She has worked as a special education teacher in both a large high school setting and at a therapeutic day school. She has also worked as an ABA service provider. She is thrilled to join our team. We welcome Stephanie Plein to our speech and language team! She has her Master's Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Stephanie comes to us from the Cove School and has also worked at SEDOL and within the pediatric clinical setting. Stephanie is a wonderful addition to our team and we are excited to welcome her. Kari Becker continues as Academic Director and is your point person for specific academic questions or concerns. Kari will also continue in a more active role this Fall working directly with students and consulting more closely with families. Cris Lovendahl continues as Therapeutic Director and can answer any of your questions about the therapeutic plan.

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Christi Steiner, our Program Director is available for day to day questions. Case management assignments are being finalized and you will be contacted by your case manager the week of the 24<sup>th</sup>.

At the beginning of each year, we are required to update all student forms. The following forms need to be completed and returned by the first day of school, Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.

- Student Contact Sheet
- Release of Information
- Remote Learning Video/Audio Release
- Physical Therapy Prescription (If Applicable)

A copy of the revised 2020/2021 school calendar will be sent you once approved by ISBE. Please note that the last day of the regular school year is tentative due to the possibility of school closings or other changes throughout the year.

We have also enclosed our communication, bullying, and behavior intervention and physical restraint policies for your review. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies. For now, we will not be requesting school supplies until we approach in-person learning. A revised list will be sent out at that time.

Best,

Cris Lovendahl  
Executive Director  
Therapeutic Director

Kari Becker  
Academic Director

Christi Steiner  
Program Director

## OUR CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS

MODEL 1 FULL-TIME REMOTE LEARNING	MODEL 2 BLENDED LEARNING	MODEL 3 FULL IN-PERSON LEARNING WITH SAFETY PROTOCOLS
<p>Live sessions for 1:1 instruction and additional synchronous instruction.</p> <p>Use of digital platforms to disseminate and collect work.</p> <p>Building open for staff only.</p> <p>Instruction is provided between regular school hours.</p> <p>All students have access to District issued iPad/device and investigate hot spots.</p> <p>Daily live check in/check outs.</p> <p>Attendance required.</p> <p>Alternative Format using paper/ pencil and manipulatives/vlcro may be approved based on priority and availability.</p> <p>Small groups will be conducted remotely.</p>	<p>½ Day In-Person/ ½ Day Asynchronous Learning.</p> <p>Use of digital platforms to disseminate and collect work.</p> <p>Face Coverings required for all entering the school.</p> <p>Building limited to 30 or less people.</p> <p>Private sanitized and disinfected room and materials for each student during instruction. Staff rotates into private room.</p> <p>No locker use.</p> <p>Social distancing as close to 6 feet as possible.</p> <p>Frequent Handwashing Required.</p> <p>Symptom screening for all entering the school strictly observed.</p> <p>Small groups will be conducted remotely.</p>	<p>5 days/week In-Person Full Day Learning.</p> <p>Use of digital platforms to disseminate and collect work.</p> <p>Face Coverings may still be required.</p> <p>Building limited to 50 or less people.</p> <p>Students transition through all workstations, rather than staff rotation.</p> <p>Locker use permitted.</p> <p>Social distancing of 3-6 feet; Small groups may be conducted in a shared room.</p> <p>Routine Handwashing Required.</p> <p>Symptom screening for all entering the school with return to a more typical illness policy.</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting will continue.</p>

### Mitigation Criteria:

- Regions 9 and 10 must be in Phase 5 for Full In-Person Learning with safety protocols and positivity rate below 2% AND
- Admin will continue to monitor the capacity to maintain full in-person on a 21-day cycle.
- Regions 9 and 10 must be in Phase 4 or above for Blended Learning AND
- Regional (9 and 10) and County (Lake/McHenry/Suburban Cook) positivity rates must be under 5% for fourteen consecutive days AND
- Must have an available supply of PPE and cleaning/disinfecting products AND
- Available staff to ensure a safe learning environment AND
- The ability to implement and tolerate the stated instructional model requirements.
- Full-Time Remote Learning will be implemented whenever Blended or Full In-person Learning are not available.

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