

July 31, 2020

Parents/Guardians,

MCESC Student Programs are dedicated to serving your students. Serving students from approximately 30 different districts, we have always taken great pride in providing life-changing services to the students entrusted in our care. Our teachers and support staff embrace the needs of your students and provide exemplary service.

During our time of extended school closure with remote learning, we realized just how important it was that our staff have face-to-face interactions with your students. The best and most effective place to hold such interactions is within our school facilities. But we also know that the safety of your students is just as important. To meet the substantial needs of your students, we must be diligent in the practices and procedures we use to keep everyone safe within our buildings, including our own staff while we reopen our school doors.

We also have come to embrace that we must learn to live with COVID-19 as safely as possible. There is not an environment that will be held harmless when it comes to COVID-19. We have taken our cues from the local health department, the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Education. Once we reopen school this coming August, we will continue to follow our local health department's guidelines and protocols. Our school nurses, building principals, and district staff will take the lead to work with the health department to make all necessary decisions and then communicate the appropriate information to those involved, including you, our parents.

Even though COVID-19 has held our focus for many weeks now, please don't forget that we are opening a new Learning Center, Learning Center North! With that move, our elementary ED and K-8 MD programming will now attend Learning Center West while our 7-12 ED and 9-23 MD program will be attending Learning Center North. Additionally, all of our PreK programming will now be located at Learning Center East. The buildings are really taking shape and we cannot wait for your students to see their new classrooms! Please look for another notification coming your way soon, inviting you to an open house at each of the newly renovated facilities.

As crazy as the spring was for us all, we are really looking forward to seeing your students back at school. In order to do that we will be following Dayton Montgomery County Public Health Guidelines while adhering to the following MCESC procedures:

Student Attendance

MCESC intends to have all students back at the various buildings/facilities as per the adopted school calendar. Because our K-12 student population attends the Learning Centers as a result of an IEP Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) assignment, Remote Learning will not be an automatic choice for parents. If parents would like to discuss the Remote Learning option, the IEP team is to be convened and the decision to change the LRE from a separate facility to home instruction will be documented if appropriate. All details regarding services and providers of services will be addressed and documented through the IEP process.

In the event, a student needs to be placed in Remote Learning while ill, recovering, or any other short-term situation, MCESC will provide Remote Learning while documenting the progress and communication with the family and home district.

MCESC will follow all Executive Orders issued by state and federal agencies.

Healing, Training and Education

MCESC is working with Dayton Montgomery County Public Health and Dayton Children's Medical Center to provide training and educational materials to MCESC staff, students, parents, and other community members.

It is also important to embrace that many of our staff and students have been trauma-impacted by COVID-19 in general. Family members have lost jobs, the illness is prevalent in our extended and immediate circles, the extended school closure caused a lot of anxiety, the quarantine time surfaced depression in many, just to name a few issues realized by many. We will lean on our school-based therapists and our Neurosequential Model for Education (NME) practices to help build times of healing into our daily schedules. Morning meetings, staff & student check-ins, self-care support, and other means should be included in daily routines.

We understand that anxiety and tension is at an all time high for various reasons. Therefore MCESC is committed to our long-standing efforts to educate and equip our students and staff with social emotional competencies to navigate these challenging times. This includes looking at our programming and procedures through a lens of equity.

Family Plans

MCESC will be establishing a Family Plan to document information that may be needed if a student is placed into a Remote Learning environment for whatever reason while being

educated by MCECSC. Communicating with parents and families proved to be difficult during the extended school closure last school year. It is our goal to mitigate communication barriers from the beginning of the school year. We strive to achieve equitable family engagement.

Access to devices and wi-fi hotspots for families is still being procured. We will deploy these access points when needed and when available.

Parent Square will be utilized this school year to support communication with staff and with families.

Daily Self-Monitoring

Parents and caregivers are to assess their child's health and well-being before leaving the home each day. If a student is not feeling well, please keep them home and report their absence to the Learning Center as soon as possible. MCECSC is exploring a digital way to report your child's daily health-assessment that is required by the Department of Health. Staff members will be expected to do the same. While temperatures are only one part of a daily health assessment, any student or staff member with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will not be allowed to come to or stay at school.

Bus Drop Off and Pick Up Practices

These two times of the day are traditionally times of mass transition. This year will be even more cumbersome. While we still need to practice our historical safety protocols, we will need to do our best to space out the students while practicing our normed entrance and exit procedures. We encourage you to speak with your student about needing extra patience during these times.

Daily Schedules

It is typical for MCECSC Learning Center students to follow flexible and alternative schedules as a norm. However, this year staff and principals will be working with each grade level to minimize the amount of interaction between students and staff. "Homeroom" groups will stay together as much as possible throughout the day. While they may need to rotate to a different classroom for another course, these transitions will be minimized. The number of adults assigned to each group of students will remain as constant as possible.

Building life skills for our students is still very important, but we will not be going out for Work-Based Learning experiences or field trips. Our staff will provide as many life skill

opportunities as possible within our building locations. Our intention will be to resume work-based learning out in the community as soon as it is safe to do so.

MD Students and Assigned Areas

The most medically fragile students typically are within our MD classrooms. These self-contained classrooms will pay extra attention to sanitation and cleanliness habits. It is also recognized that when working with some of our MD students within the educational setting, social distancing will not be able to be conducted. Staff will take all necessary precautions and wear PPE as they see appropriate for the safety of your student and for their own safety.

Social Distancing

A 6 ft distance between individuals will be attempted at all times throughout the day. However, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests a 3 ft distance, while less effective, can be utilized. With our class size max of 10, we do have enough room to be able to keep desks at least 3 ft apart in our classrooms, many times even farther. Again, our student population lends itself to the need for closer proximity to keep students safe in some cases. Staff safety is also our priority, so we ask that your student be diligent in hand sanitizing, use of face coverings, and adherence of their distance from other students.

Face Coverings

Face masks or shields shall be worn by all students and staff. Preschool students will not be required to wear face coverings.

Student exceptions will be documented through the IEP process. Face covering breaks can be determined at the teacher's discretion based on the activity occurring within the classroom. It is noted that many of our Learning Center students who face documented sensory issues may exhibit behaviors associated with wearing the facial covering. Our staff will work with these situations on a case by case scenario. Students will need to wear the face covering during the transition in and out of the buildings, while in hallways and any other indoor common area, with the exception of the cafeteria while eating. Students do not need to wear face coverings while actively participating in outdoor recess.

Staff will wear their face covering at all times while at work. Daily staff exceptions include staff who are working alone in their classrooms or offices and during lunchtimes.

Visitors

There will be no school visitors as a general rule. We will not be holding assemblies, presentations, etc. with outside vendors at this time. However, students often have community agency visitors that need to see students during school hours. Principals will contact these representatives, as they know of them, to ensure they make an appointment to see students. The Director of Student Programs will also contact known agencies to communicate these practices: agency representatives will need to sign in/out, wear a face covering at all times, have their temperature checked on-site, and meet with the student in a designated area in the school building. Students should be walked to and from the designated area aligned to the appointment time.

IEP/ETR and other team meetings, including Clinical Visits for medicine checks will be scheduled and all attendees coming into the buildings will be required to sign in/out and have a temperature check onsite. Seating arrangements will include 6 ft social distancing and a seating chart kept on file after the meeting. Remote or distance meetings will be made available when and if necessary or convenient. Signatures will be gathered under the IEP rules at the time of the meeting.

Cafeteria Usage for Breakfast and Lunch

Building principals will work with the Director of Administration and Operations and when appropriate or needed, staff may take students' lunches back to the classroom to eat in order to minimize student travel throughout the building. Lunch scheduling and rotation of use of cafeteria space will be done at each Learning Center.

Classroom Materials

Classroom materials and supplies will not be shared by students unless the materials and supplies can be sanitized between student use. It is understood this will limit the amount of usage for certain materials and supplies with students.

Chromebooks will be wiped down each time they are used.

Related Services, Clinical Visits and School-Based Mental Therapy

All student services will be scheduled ahead of time in a designated location.

Therapists/Doctors/Nurses are required to do a daily health assessment as well before entering their service area of our buildings. They are also responsible for cleaning the area of service and equipment between students. Student facial coverings can be removed during therapy as decided by each therapist/doctor/nurse.

Teletherapies and Telehealth visits can and will be used as needed, as appropriate under the federal and state guidelines.

Drinking Fountains

MCEC is looking into converting drinking fountains into bottle filling stations. MCEC will be purchasing a water bottle for each student to use throughout the day. As with most new procedures incorporated into our students' day, there will need to be a lot of practice and repetitive guidance. The natural tension between learning a new routine and not triggering new behaviors is expected. Staff and administration will handle this with patience and focus. We encourage you to work with your students at home, as well.

Teachers will have the flexibility to establish the classroom routines appropriate for their class' bottles, including storage and cleaning.

Use of Restrooms:

A limited number of students will be able to go to the facilities at a time during classes. Even though hand sanitizer will be used upon the return of students to the classroom after using the restroom we will be repeatedly reviewing appropriate use of public restrooms and the required handwashing that goes along with it. We encourage you to work with your students at home, as well. No group restroom breaks will be given.

Signage

It is expected that all students and staff will adhere to the required signage displayed in each facility. Signage will display required information as well as, direction of hallway movement, physical distancing marks to keep students safe, and where prohibited areas exist, etc.

Building Isolation, Sanitization, and Cleaning

As directed, MCEC will have a dedicated room in each of the Learning Centers for isolation purposes during the school day. These rooms will be used to keep students and staff isolated from others when there is a suspected case of COVID-19. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as a student is taken to the isolation room. For this reason, it is vital that contact information be kept up to date at all times. The use of this room should not be frequent if the safety provisions are followed on a daily basis by everyone on the Learning Centers' campuses.

MCEC is hiring additional support to clean the buildings' high touch areas (e.g., handrails, doorknobs) each evening. Normal cleaning and sanitizing of the buildings will occur by the dedicated staff assigned to each Learning Center.

Student Transportation Home

When a student has to be transported home by one of our staff, the students and staff must wear a mask (not shield) and be separated as far apart as possible.

Restraints


Typical procedures for the use of restraints will continue when necessary with ongoing CPI guidance from each building's team designated personnel. It is understood this will put staff and students at closer proximity to each other and social distancing will not be able to be maintained. Restraints are not used in preschool.

MISC

We continue to encourage strong hygiene habits for all students. Frequently washing hands, covering your mouth when you sneeze with a cloth material (sneezing into your shirt) or use of a tissue, washing the clothes worn to school each day, washing of coats (during colder seasons), etc. are a few good practices. Additionally, sleep and hydration continue to be good ways to stay healthy to fight off viruses and other illnesses.

Please also see the updated Dayton Montgomery County Public Health Guidelines at <https://www.phdmc.org/coronavirus-updates/373-guidance-for-montgomery-county-schools>. MCESC has used this document as well as documents from the Center for Disease Control, CASEL, other Montgomery County districts, Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Department of Education among other agencies to create the MCESC ReSet ReStart document. We will continue to monitor the situation and build practices needed to keep our doors open while providing the safest working and learning environment possible.

Kind Regards,



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