MCESC Student Programs are dedicated to serving students with the most challenging IEP needs. Serving students from approximately 30 different districts, we have always taken great pride in providing life-changing services to the students sent to us. Serving these students takes a special person. Our teachers and support staff embrace the needs of our students and provide exemplary service. But each one of you knows and understands that we only get to do the amazing work we do because the IEP teams of our students have made the decision to place their students in one of the most restrictive environments allowed. Our students are challenged learners, to begin with, but oftentimes come from very challenging home environments as well.

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 our students. The best and most effective place to hold such interactions is within our school facilities. But we also know that the safety of our students is just as important as the safety of our staff. To meet the substantial needs of our students, we must be diligent in the practices and procedures we use to keep everyone safe within our buildings.

The most pressing concern we hear is the need for a protocol when there are suspected or even confirmed COVID-19 cases within our staff. Please note, we have been handling staff cases as we have been made aware. We have taken our cues from the local health department and have extended the new federal allowances to staff as necessary. Once we reopen school this coming August, we will continue to follow our local health department's guidelines and protocols, but understand each case will be an individual set of circumstances that we will need to work through. 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. Starting on page one and all of page two of the Dayton Montgomery County Public Health Guidelines gives you a quick glance at the standard protocols associated with a suspected case, a confirmed case, and returning to school after the illness.

In addition to the Dayton Montgomery County Public Health Guidelines, MCESC will be adhering to the following 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. Staff PD days will be used, in addition to emailed information that staff will be expected to read/watch. More information will be provided, especially as the COVID-19 situation remains fluid.

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. This will require staff to be flexible in assignments throughout the school year. The need for Tap-In/Outs has always been part of the Learning Centers’ way when dealing with certain student situations, but with illness and minimized transitions in our schedules, we will need to remain flexible in assignments as the need for revision of schedules will be fluid.

It is also important to remember that the landscape of racial tension is heightened. 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. MCESC will continue to embrace anti-racist training and learning, as we continue to be better SEL minded educators.

**Family Plans**
MCESC will be establishing a Family Plan Template to document information that may be needed if a student is placed into a Remote Learning environment for whatever reason while being educated by MCESC. 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**
Public health officials have indicated that temperatures are just one aspect of daily health assessments. Oftentimes staff notices a difference in how a student or fellow staff member looks or behaves. If there is any thought to a student not feeling well, a staff member is encouraged to take the student to the clinic or complete a temperature check within the classroom. If a staff member is not feeling well, the staff member should notify the office for coverage and then proceed to the clinic to have their temperature taken. Thermometers will be available in the building for teacher usage in classrooms, if and when needed.

**Bus Drop Off and Pick Up Practices**
These two times of the day are traditionally a trial and error exercise. 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.

**Daily Schedules**
It is not atypical for MCESC LC students to follow flexible and alternative schedules as a norm. However, staff and principals should work at each grade level to minimize the amount of interaction between students and staff. "Homeroom" groups should stay together all day. While they may need to rotate to a different classroom for another course, these transitions should be minimized. The number of adults assigned to each group of students should remain as constant as possible.

We will work through BLTs and SBTs to ensure schedules are communicated to all staff. Teachers should make frequent attempts to keep parents up to date with students’ schedules.

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. Staff is encouraged to provide as many life skill opportunities as possible within our building locations. Again, this will require detailed scheduling and in some cases training for our students. All supplies and materials needed will need to be acquired through a process set up by the Director of Student Programs within each BLT. For example, students who would normally go out into the community partner locations to provide janitorial services can be trained on our own cleaning practices. Students should be able to gain the same skills within our own facilities. 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 need to pay extra attention to sanitation and cleanliness habits.

Supplies and materials will be provided to each classroom, in order to ensure timely and proper use.
Scrub jackets will be purchased for staff working directly with our MD population. These outer coverings will need to be worn in addition to face coverings and gloves when toileting, changing or feeding students. It is also recognized that when working with low functioning MD students within the educational setting, social distancing will not be able to be conducted. Staff will have the option to wear the scrub jackets or some other personal outer covering, as they see appropriate for their own safety.

**Social Distancing**
A 6 ft distance between individuals should 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 you be diligent in your own hand sanitizing, use of face coverings, and enforcement of student distance from other students.

**Face Coverings**
Face masks or shields shall be worn by all students and staff.

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. Factors to consider should include significantly increased respiratory effort on the part of a student such as a change in respiratory rate, significant change in chest expansion or sudden irritability. It is noted that many of our Learning Center students who face documented sensory issues may exhibit behaviors associated with wearing the facial covering. However, 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 should 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. However, during lunchtime, a 6ft distance must be kept between individuals who are eating. Any other staff exceptions will be handled by the Director of HR and need to be addressed prior to the staff’s first day of work. The Governing Board of MCESC is required by Executive Order to adopt a Face Covering Policy. We anticipate doing this at the 7/30/2020 Board Meeting.

**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 POs and other agency visitors that need to see students during school hours. Principals will need to 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 on-site. 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.

Deliveries should be handled by the custodian or food service representative in each building. The delivery providers should be contacted to ensure proper drop off can be made with minimal if any staff and student interaction.

Preschool Promise appointments at LCN will be scheduled, temperature checks will be made when guests arrive and sign-in. A Preschool Promise representative will meet their guest at the entry and escort the guest in and out of the building.

**Cafeteria Usage for Breakfast and Lunch.**
Building principals will need to work with the Director of Administration and Operations to understand the capacity of cafeteria spaces. 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 should be done at the building level.

**Classroom Materials**
Classroom materials and supplies should 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 need to be wiped down each time they are used. Disinfectant wipes will be provided to each classroom. A building procedure will be established to notify when supplies are low and need to be restocked.

Staff will need to also wipe down personally used equipment, such as but not limited to the phones, keyboards, staff desks in the classrooms, and offices on a daily basis, at a minimum. If more than one adult in the room is sharing the use of computer keyboards, phones, etc. the item should be wiped down between each use.
Related Services, Clinical Visits and School-Based Mental Therapy
All student services should 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
MCESC is looking into converting drinking fountains into bottle filling stations. MCESC 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 are encouraged to handle this with patience and focus.

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

Use of Restrooms:
Common sense should prevail here. Limit the number of students who go to the facilities to one per class at a time. Make sure we reiterate the appropriate use of public restrooms and the required handwashing that goes along with it. Hand sanitizer should be used upon the return of students to the classroom, just in case. No group restroom breaks should be given.

Signage
The Director of Administration and Operations will work with the custodial staff and building principal to ensure all required signage is adequately displayed in each facility. Additionally, they will physically establish any signage noting the direction of hallway movement, physical distancing marks on floors, prohibiting the use of the facility, etc.

Building Isolation, Sanitization, and Cleaning
MCESC will have a dedicated room in each of the Learning Centers for isolation purposes during the school day.

MCESC is hiring additional support to clean the buildings’ high touch areas (e.g., handrails, doorknobs) each evening. Thus we will ask the staff members to vacate the building by a certain time each afternoon (curfew). No one will be allowed to use the building after the designated “curfew,” including on the weekends. Please note, we have an agreement with Northridge and if they utilize the building during our “curfew” times, they will ensure re-sanitization will occur.

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. Each situation should be documented with the building principal (location of riders, name of students, name of second adult, location of drop-off, driver name). Each vehicle used should be cleaned as per the Director of Administration and Operation’s instructions.

Restraints
Typical procedures for the use of restraints should continue when necessary with ongoing CPI guidance from each building’s team designated personnel. However, the student’s position and respiratory distress, especially if a facial covering is still in place should be keenly monitored. 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. If at all possible, extra precaution should be taken. Intentional considerations should include but are not limited to:
- are any other de-escalation techniques be put into play
- is it evident the student is headed into a melt-down and can I get extra PPE in place
- can I tap-out and let another staff tap-in to avoid being in close contact for 10-15 minutes
- if I am a floater, can I put extra PPE in place before I arrive at the location I am being called to

All restraints will need to be documented as normal but need to additionally include the duration of hold, positioning of all involved, and the type of PPE worn during the hold.

MISC
Staff should make considerations about the type of clothing worn to school each day. It has been recommended that clothing worn in public facilities should be washed after each wear. Because we take this suggestion to be another potential way to help staff and students keep good hygiene measures in place, we will allow any and all staff working directly with students to wear scrubs to work. MCESC will again be providing an MCESC t-shirt this year. Through wellness funds, we will also be providing one MCESC face mask to staff. Shields will be available as needed.

In addition to the Dayton Montgomery County Public Health Guidelines, MCESC has used documents from the CDC, CASEL, other MC districts, ODH, ODE among other agencies to create this document. We will continue to build out these practices needed to keep our doors open while providing the safest working and learning environment. Student Programs will continue to use the DLT/BLT/SBT mechanism to address changes needed to keep the safest working/learning environment available to our staff and students.

MCESC will continue to work with ODE, DMCPH, Dayton Children’s Medical Center to address the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation within our state and county. We will make necessary changes to these practices, as it relates to the Health Warning System the state has now released and will follow all mandates put forth at the state or federal levels.
GUIDANCE FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS

PREFACE: All Ohio schools closed for the remainder of the school calendar beginning on March 10, 2020, by order of the Governor and the Director of the Ohio Department of Health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ohio Department of Health released guidelines for schools to follow during the 2020-21 school year on July 2, 2020.

These general principles will guide each school district as they move forward with re-opening schools throughout Montgomery County.

✔ Each school district will implement recommended safety protocols to the highest degree possible.

✔ Each school district will work closely with Public Health – Dayton & Montgomery County to promote safety in each school building.

✔ Each school district will be transparent with all stakeholders that some level of risk will always be present when children and school district employees occupy school district facilities.

✔ School districts recognize the need for consistency in areas of operations while recognizing that individual differences in classroom sizes, school facilities, and building operations may lead to some inconsistencies.

Daily Self-Monitoring

Students and staff should self-monitor symptoms and temperature in the morning before arriving at school.

Symptoms may include:

- Fever over 103.4 degrees Fahrenheit or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

Incorporating guidelines for Family, Caregivers and Staff exposed to COVID-19 (Quarantine)

Staff or Parents/Caregiver should notify the school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they, or any member of the household have been diagnosed or who are presumed to have COVID-19. When this occurs:

- The reported personnel or student must self-quarantine at home for 14 days (consider other learning options for quarantined student).

GUIDANCE FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Plan for a Suspected Case or Positive Case

Staff or student begins exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

• They should immediately be isolated (placed in a separate room, monitored by personnel maintaining social distancing and wearing PPE).
• Send the ill staff member home - request they seek out their medical provider for further guidance.
• Call family to pick up sick student as quickly as possible.
• Establish procedure for safely transporting anyone with severe symptoms from COVID-19 to a healthcare facility in case of an emergency.
• If calling an ambulance or taking someone to the hospital, try to call ahead to alert the hospital staff that the person may have COVID-19.

Districts must be prepared for the possibility that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.

• Once the school is aware of staff or a student that has tested positive for COVID-19, please contact Public Health to report the case at 327-225-4508.
• A positive case will prompt a case investigation on the positive case resulting in needed information on potential close contacts.
• The school district will cooperate with Public Health in contact tracing to identify close contacts of the case of COVID-19.
• Public Health will assist in developing a letter for school districts to use and the letter will explain/define what is considered close contact to a COVID-19 case and the need for a 14 day quarantine.
• Definition of close contact: someone within 6 ft. of a case for at least 15 minutes during the contact window.
• Definition of contact window:
  o Symptomatic case - 48 hours before symptom onset date until the date the case is isolated.
  o Asymptomatic case - 48 hours before the specimen was collected until the case was isolated.
• To expedite in the assistance in contact tracing, plans should include updated attendance records, seating charts, and updated contact/phone numbers.

Returning to School After Illness

Student or staff diagnosed as having COVID-19 with symptoms must meet the following criteria to return to school:

• 3 days with no fever (without using fever reducing medication) and
• other symptoms improved and
• 10 days since symptoms first appeared

Student or staff diagnosed as having COVID-19 without symptoms (asymptomatic) must meet the following criteria to return to school:

• 10 days have passed since test without any symptoms developing

Food Service

Food service will be determined by each district in compliance with Public Health requirements:

- No self-service using common utensils or shared condiments (salad bars etc.)
- Utilize other areas such as classrooms, library etc. for lunch areas.
- Public Health recommends assigning seats.
- Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.
- Clean and sanitize chairs and tables between seatings of students for meals.
- Cafeteria occupancy will be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. Separation recommendation, based on Ohio School Guidance, is 6 ft where possible.

Classroom Occupancy

Districts will inform parents that safety protocols are in place but any student who attends school will incur some level of risk. Districts will decrease the likelihood of infection with hygiene, cleaning, and safety procedures, but being in a public place has a certain level of risk that cannot be eliminated.

Classroom occupancy will be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible. Separation based on Ohio School Guidance is 6 feet where possible.

Face masks are recommended for all students in grades 3 - 12.

As with other businesses, all school staff and volunteers must wear face masks unless it is unsafe to do so or where doing so would significantly interfere with the learning process. There are exceptions to this as listed in the Ohio guidance. Schools must develop a face mask policy.

Public Health recommends assigning seats.

Public Health recommends no sharing of school supplies (no pooled resources.) All students should have their own crayons, scissors etc.

Visitors/Volunteers

There are different levels of school visitors, and each district will make decisions for each situation.

Visitors are generally discouraged from being in school district facilities. If visitors are present, a face mask is required.

Safety protocols such as taking temperatures and monitoring health symptoms will be implemented for all visitors.
Transportation

Districts should attempt to seat siblings together.

Seating charts are recommended to assist with contact tracing if that is needed.

Face masks are required for drivers and highly recommended for students if social distancing cannot be maintained.

Recess

School districts will make every effort to maintain consistency with other safety procedures.

This may mean that districts limit student access to certain pieces of playground equipment and restrict activities that are "high touch" and difficult to clean or maintain social distancing.

Students must sanitize or wash their hands after recess.

Specialty Classes

Due to the nature of band, choir, theater, and other similar classes, 6-feet social distancing may not be adequate. Teachers and students should maintain as much distance as possible when actively playing and performing.

Library items should be removed from circulation for 72 hours after item is returned.

Cleaning/Sanitizing

Public Health strongly recommends that approved sanitizers and cleaners be used: EPA sanitizers and cleaners [link]

Effective against COVID-19

Schools must clean surfaces frequently, paying close attention to high touch areas and shared materials, and make sanitation wipes or disinfectants labeled for use against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) available in each room and common space. The sharing of supplies and materials should be minimized and if items must be shared, sanitized between each user.

Water Systems

To minimize the risk of Legionnaire’s disease and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.


Other Resources


This document is subject to change as State and Federal guidelines are updated.