**School Re-opening Plan**

**Agency Name:** North Country Kids

**BEDS Code**: 800000058077

**Program Address:** 22 New York Road, Plattsburgh, NY 12903

**Program provided at this site:**  4410 (Preschool Special Education)

**Contact Person:** Stephanie Girard, School Administrator

**Contact Phone Number:** (518) 561-3803

**Contact Email Address:** [s.girard@nckidsinc.com](mailto:s.girard@nckidsinc.com)

**Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted:** [www.nckidsinc.com](http://www.nckidsinc.com), bulletin board on site and will be emailed to enrolled families.

**Introduction**

This plan was developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their July 2020, document entitled: Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s Schools-Reopening Guidance. We will rely on continued input from all stakeholders as we move forward implementing this plan and as we contemplate any additions or modifications. We know our program must be as flexible and as responsive as possible to meet the needs of our students, families, and staff members. We will closely monitor the conditions of our community as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the effectiveness and appropriateness of our plan. Be assured that nothing has changed our sincere commitment to our students and our determination to provide the highest possible quality of educational programming and related services even during these difficult times.

The goal of the plan is to guide the delivery of high-quality educational services as safely as possible whether that service delivery is in person, through a remote learning platform or a blended combination of remote and in person services. Our focus and concerns extend to the social and emotional needs of our students, families, and staff members. By diligently working together and remaining focused on the outcomes we desire, we can find solutions to the many challenges ahead.

Our plan includes all the required elements identified by NYSED and follows the structure of the guidance by addressing the following areas as they apply to our students with disabilities and their families:

1. Communication/Family and Community Engagement
2. Health and Safety
3. Facilities
4. Nutrition
5. Transportation
6. Social Emotional Well-Being
7. School Schedules
8. Budget and Fiscal
9. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
10. Technology and Connectivity
11. Teaching and Learning
12. Career and Technical Education
13. Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities
14. Special Education
15. Staffing
16. Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
17. Student Teaching

Any suggestions, concerns and/or questions about our plan should be directed to the contact person identified at the beginning of this document.

**Communication/Family and Community Engagement**

The North Country Kids reopening plan was developed in collaboration with local school district personnel in which our preschool children reside, to include administrators, teachers, and chairpersons. Other stakeholders include collaboration with other local preschool programs, our local health department, parents, the State Education Department following the July 2020 document entitled: Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s Schools-Reopening Guidance, New York State Department of Health, Office of Children and Family Services and the Center for Disease Control. North Country Kids teachers, staff and administrators were also involved in developing this plan to educate children through in-person, hybrid and remote learning models while keeping safety the upmost priority.

Information included in this plan will be distributed to staff members through virtual trainings and small group trainings containing social distancing and PPE.

Parents and families will be trained on new facility health and safety standards. Information will be provided in written format, through social media, and video. North Country Kids will hold three zoom meeting for families to discuss the re-opening plan outlining the expectations of families and staff. All staff are required to read the re-opening plan and a presentation will be held to train staff on their expectations for re-opening. This plan will be posted on the North Country Kids website at [www.nckidsinc.com](http://www.nckidsinc.com) and the North Country Kids facebook page. Communication with families will be provided in their native language. North Country Kids will provide regular updates regarding health and safety, scheduling, and other pertinent information through written means, class dojo, google classroom and our Facebook page.

Parents will be provided written information and video training from the CDC website that instruct parents in screening students at home for signs of illness.

Children attending our program will be taught proper hand washing, respiratory hygiene, and social distancing through engaging age appropriate learning activities. These rules will be reinforced throughout the school day.

Visitors and delivery personnel will be instructed to call the office through signage on the door before entering the building. They will be instructed by phone of the protocols they must follow before entering the building.

**Health and Safety Plan**

NOTE: Students and staff will return to in person instruction only when governmental authorities permit in person education. Additionally any return to in person instruction will necessitate that the school’s leadership also determines the number of students and staff allowed to return in person based on: the ability to maintain social distancing; the availability of PPE, including the availability of cloth face coverings and face masks; availability of safe transportation; and local hospital capacity according to the local Department of Health.

The health and safety of the children and adults in our school is paramount. Health and safety considerations must always come first in every decision made and every action taken by our schools. Whether instruction is provided in-person, remotely, or through a combination of the two, we have an important role to play in educating and communicating with school communities about the everyday preventive actions they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Prevention is accomplished by following the recommendations of health authorities in the following areas:

• Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings;

• Social Distancing;

• Health Checks;

• Management of Ill Persons; and

• Healthy Hygiene Practices;

• Cleaning and Disinfection.

**Face Coverings**

Any time therapists and teachers cannot maintain appropriate social distancing, individuals must wear acceptable face covering.

Face coverings are always recommended , except for meals and instruction with appropriate social distancing.

Children are always required to wear face covering if developmentally appropriate and feasible. If children are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including children where such covering would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face coverings. For those children who can tolerate wearing a mask they will be required to do so during instructional times, such as circle time and centers where social distancing is not practical. A lanyard will be provided to each child to attach the mask to when not in use. North Country Kids teaches children in a special education preschool setting with students between the ages of 3-5. We offer 6:1:2 self-contained classrooms with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder who have significant sensory deficits in which a mask could be perceived as an aversive. We believe masks in general for children under the age of five will impact their ability to learn in a nurturing environment. Students below the age of five are learning basic self-help skills and need assistance to wash hands, toilet, eat and blow their nose. We do not feel they can effectively take a mask on and off and understand the importance of not touching or adjusting the mask. We devote a unit of study in our integrated preschool classrooms to understanding germs and the role of a doctor. Developmental practice at this age is hands and concrete, children learn in a three-dimensional world and do not yet understand abstract concepts that cannot be seen. The concept of germs and how to handle them is in advanced concept for preschool special needs children. We practice effective hand washing and self-hygiene skills all year and we will continue to teach these practices on a daily basis, however we believe a mask creates a barrier to effective learning and will be a challenge, distraction and obstruction to education services and instruction for this population of special needs students and children under the age of five.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

Acceptable face coverings will be provided to staff and will be worn by all staff whenever they are within six feet of children or staff. Acceptable face coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (homemade, bandana) and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Face shields worn without other face coverings are not considered adequate protection against COVID-19 and should not be used.

Providers may use alternate PPE (face coverings that are transparent around the mouth) for instruction or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouth (speech therapy). They may also be used for certain students (hearing impaired) who benefit from being able to see the face. Classroom staff will be provided five cloth masks and they will be trained on proper cleaning of the masks. Disposable masks will be on hand for visitors or anyone who forgets their mask or has a contaminated mask.

Providers, families, and visitors will be advised of the policy to wear face coverings in common areas or situations where social distancing may be difficult to maintain.

Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and must not be shared. Staff received training on the proper use and care of masks as recommended by the CDC.

Kelly McCauley, Director will be responsible for ensuring a three-month supply of PPE equipment is available.

Responsible parties will be trained on how to adequately put on, take off, clean and discard PPE.

Mask breaks will be provided for providers and children when they can maintain social distancing.

**Social Distancing**

Providers will ensure that appropriate social distancing is maintained between individuals while in school and on school grounds, unless safety or the core activity (instruction, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance. Many core function activities in the preschool setting involve hands on activities and seating within proximity to a teacher. During these times children that can will be required to wear masks, as well as classroom staff.

**Health Checks**

**Child arrival at school**

Daily Health Checks and COVID Screenings will be performed each morning before the students enter their classrooms and documented on the OCFS 4443 Attendance Form. When receiving a student the teacher will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness, and confirm that the child is not experiencing coughing or shortness of breath.

**Take the child’s temperature.**

Staff will use Non-contact (temporal) thermometers wearing gloves and a face shield when conducting temperature checks. If the staff member does not have physical contact with a student, gloves do not need to be changed before the next student is checked. The non-contact thermometers will be clean with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each student. The same wipe can be reused as long as it remains wet. If a child fails the screening or shows signs of COVID-19 during the school day staff will call the parent/guardian to pick up the child as soon as possible. The child will remain in the sensory/isolation room with an adult supervising with the window open for ventilation.

After screenings are complete an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol or hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds will occur. If hands are visibly soiled, soap and water should be used before using alcohol-based hand sanitizer. All staff will be properly trained to conduct health/temperature checks.

Parents/guardians and staff members will be provided resources to educate them regarding the careful observation of symptoms of COVID-19 and health screening that must be conducted each morning before coming to school. Parents/guardians and school staff must be instructed that any student or staff member with a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater and/or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection should not be present in school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) keep an up to date list of symptoms of Coronavirus on its website. This list is not all inclusive as some individuals may display other symptoms or none at all.

As of 7/13/2020, the following are listed as the most common symptoms of COVID-19:

• Fever or chills (100°F or greater);

• Cough;

• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;

• Fatigue;

• Muscle or body aches;

• Headache;

• New loss of taste or smell;

• Sore throat;

• Congestion or runny nose;

• Nausea or vomiting; and/or Diarrhea.

It is strongly recommended that all staff are educated to observe students or other staff members for signs of any type of illness such as:

• Flushed cheeks;

• Rapid or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity);

• Fatigue, and/or irritability; and

• Frequent use of the bathroom.

If a student is exhibiting these signs with no other explanation for them, the school will contact the parent/guardian to come pick up their ill child. Health screenings including daily temperature checks and completion of a screening questionnaire are required for staff, contractors, vendors, and visitors. Anyone who has a temperature of 100.4°F or greater or has a positive response on the screening questionnaire must be isolated from others and be sent home immediately. Schools should refer such persons to a healthcare provider and provide resources on COVID-19 testing. Students and staff are required to notify the school when they develop symptoms or if their answers to the questionnaire change during or outside school hours. Schools are advised to set up a means to collect this information such as a dedicated email or telephone line. Schools should encourage staff to complete required screenings prior to arrival at school and encourage parents/guardians to screen their child before sending them to school. Parents will be provided the option of signing the OCFS Screening Attestation form 6040 confirming that they will perform a daily temperature check and a screening questionnaire. The screening questions will be reviewed each Monday individually with each parent who are conducting a self-screening.

A screening questionnaire determines whether the individual has:

● knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;

● tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;

● has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.4°F in the past 14 days: and/or

● has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

Per NYSDOH, schools are prohibited from keeping records of student, faculty, staff, and visitor health data (e.g., the specific temperature data of an individual), but are permitted to maintain records that confirm individuals were screened and the result of such screening (e.g., pass/fail, cleared/not cleared). North Country Kids will provide staff and parents/guardians weekly reminders of the requirement through the use of email and/or class dojo. Written notices to homes will be provided in the parent/guardian’s native language where it is known that families cannot access the information in other means.

**Deliveries**

Pickups and deliveries will occur at the front door. Office supplies will be delivered after 1pm to limit contact to the greatest extent possible. Delivery personnel and visitors will be required to respond to the health screening questionnaire.

**Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette**

Parents, staff and children will be trained on proper respiratory hygiene which will include:

* Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
* Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
* Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

North Country Kids will supply each classroom and common areas with tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal. No touch hand sanitizer dispensers will be available throughout the building as well.

**Medically Vulnerable/High Risk Groups**

North Country Kids will offer remote learning for children in high risk groups or who have family members in high risk groups who wish their child to attend school remotely. Remote learning may be the only option we can provide due to the nature and size of our building we would be unable to social distance the child from others. In some instances, we may be able to accommodate some related services in a separate room in the building. Families who decide to keep their child on remote learning must remain on remote learning until the end of the quarter. Please inform our agency two weeks before the end of the quarter if you wish for your child to return in person. This will allow us time to change the schedule for your child’s classroom and notify bussing. You can change your child’s placement from in person to remote at any time that you do not feel comfortable.

**Management of Ill Persons**

North Country Kids does not have a nurse available on site, therefore, students and staff who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 that are not explained by a chronic health condition will be picked up for follow up with a health care provider. Ill children and/or staff will be sent home or isolated until able to be picked up. Children will be escorted from isolation areas to parent/guardian and parent will be instructed to call their health care provider. In an emergency situation staff will call 911. Health Care Plans will be encouraged for children with chronic allergies, runny nose or cough in which their health care provider does not believe the symptoms are related to COVID-19. Areas used by a sick person will be closed off until cleaned and disinfected. Windows will be opened to increase air circulation in the area. Cleaning will be conducted the following morning when possible. All areas in which the person used will be cleaned and disinfected.

Staff will be trained of the symptoms of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children associated with COVID-19 which is a serious condition associated with COVID\_19 in children and youth. Parents will be notified if their child shows any of the following symptoms and recommend the child be referred for immediate follow up with a healthcare provider:

* Fever
* Abdominal pain
* Vomiting
* Diarrhea
* Neck pain
* Rash
* Bloodshot eyes
* Feeling extra tired

911 will be called if any student demonstrates the following emergency warning signs of MIS-C or other concerning signs:

* Trouble breathing
* Pain or pressure in the chest that does not go away
* New confusion
* Inability to wake or stay awake
* Bluish lips or face
* Severe abdominal pain

If a student or staff member reports having tested positive for COVID-19, school administrators will notify the local health department to determine what steps are needed for the school community.

**Return to School after Illness**

Schools must follow CDC guidance for allowing a student or staff member to return to school after exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a person is not diagnosed by a healthcare provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) with COVID-19 they can return to school:

• Once there is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicines, and they have felt well for 24 hours;

• If they have been diagnosed with another condition and has a healthcare provider written note stating they are clear to return to school.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until:

• It has been at least ten days since the individual first had symptoms;

• It has been at least three days since the individual has had a fever (without using fever reducing medicine); and

• It has been at least three days since the individual’s symptoms improved, including cough and shortness of breath.

**Discontinuing Isolation for Persons with COVID-19**

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptomsand were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

* At least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
* At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
* Other symptoms have improved.

**COVID-19 Testing**

CDC guidance recommends that children and staff do not get COVID-19 testing or antibody testing on a regular basis, however, CVPH will be offering testing to individuals who wish to be tested or have been in contact with someone suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19.  It will occur on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12pm to 2pm at the health plaza location near Hannaford. No pre-registration is required, individuals may drive to the location and follow the posted directions.

**Contact Tracing**

North Country Kids will keep accurate attendance records of students and everyone who enters the building and where they visited in the building. Our agency will assist local health departments in tracing all contacts of any individual confirmed with COVID 19.

**School Closures**

North Country Kids will collaborate with the local health department to determine the parameters, conditions or metrics (e.g., increased absenteeism or increased illness in school community) that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level.

School administrators will consider closing school if absentee rates impact the ability of the school to operate safely. Schools may choose to modify operations prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. Schools should consult their medical director and/or the local department of health when making such decisions.

**Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection**

**Healthy Hand Hygiene Behavior**

All children, staff, and volunteers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

* Arrival to the facility and after breaks.
* Before and after preparing food or drinks.
* Before and after eating or handling food or feeding children.
* Before and after administering medication or medical ointment.
* Before and after diapering.
* After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom.
* After coming in contact with bodily fluid.
* After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste.
* After playing outdoors or in sand.
* After handling garbage.

Staff will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.

Staff will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion. Assist children with handwashing, including children who cannot wash hands alone. After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands. Posters will be placed describing handwashing steps near sinks.

For hand washing- soap, running warm water and disposable paper towels are available in each classroom and bathroom. Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol are also provided in each classroom and in common areas throughout the school.

**Washing, Feeding, or Holding a Child**

It is important to comfort crying, sad, and/or anxious children. To the extent possible, when washing, feeding, or holding very young children: Providers can protect themselves by wearing an over-large button-down, long sleeved shirt and by wearing long hair up off the collar in a ponytail or other updo. Providers should wash their hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child’s secretions. Providers should change the child’s clothes if secretions are on the child’s clothes. They should change the button-down shirt, if there are secretions on it, and wash their hands again. Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag or washed in a washing machine. Children and providers should have multiple changes of clothes on hand.

**Cleaning and Disinfection**

Daily cleaning logs will be completed using the OCFS form 6041 indicating areas needing cleaning, the time the cleaning was conducted and the staff member conducting the cleaning. Each week a designated classroom staff member will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting the classroom daily. Twice per week a professional cleaning service will clean the entire school. Staff will wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect. Surfaces will be cleaned using soap and water, then disinfectant.

Cleaning with soap and water reduced the number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. High touch surfaces include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboard, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc. Hand sanitizer will be available near high touch surfaces.

Wipeable covers will be provided for electronic devices when possible. Alcohol-based wipes will be used to clean electronics, such as tablets, ipads, dynavox and keyboards.

Staff and children will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles.

Bathrooms will be cleaned every hour to include toilet, sink, knobs, and light switches.

**Cleaning and Disinfection Following Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case**

Staff will close off areas used by the person who is sick. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment. Vacuum when everyone has left the areas. Once the areas has been appropriately disinfected it can be opened for use. Workers without close contact with the person who is sick can return to work immediately after disinfection. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection.

If more than seven days have passed since the person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection should continue.

Outdoor areas, like playgrounds generally require normal routine cleaning but do not require disinfection. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railing should be cleaned routinely. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces or ground covers is not recommended.

**Shared Objects**

Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. Keep each child’s belongings separated from others’ and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use. Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

**Clean and Sanitize Toys**

Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized should not be used. Toys that children have placed in their mouths or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretions or excretions should be set aside until they are cleaned by hand by a person wearing gloves. Staff will clean with water and detergent, rinse, sanitize with an EPA-registered disinfectant, rinse again, and air-dry. We will be mindful of items more likely to be placed in a child’s mouth, like play food, dishes, and utensils. Children will not share toys with other groups of children.

Staff will set aside toys that need to be cleaned in a separate container marked for “soiled toys.” Washing with soapy water is the ideal method for cleaning. Try to have enough toys so that the toys can be rotated through cleanings. Children’s books, like other paper-based materials such as mail or envelopes, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures.

**Facilities**

When students and adults return to their school buildings for in-person instruction, it will be vitally important that the physical spaces they occupy are configured and maintained in a way that provides the maximum possible protection from spreading the coronavirus.

Our school will follow health guidance related to social distancing and other safety measures that must be put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. To meet the requirements of that guidance, North Country Kids will rearrange the physical space within our buildings to accommodate social distancing. Decreased class size will also be necessary to limit the number of children and staff in each classroom and the building. Reduced class size will be necessary to provide enough space for mask breaks for staff and children and staff lunch breaks since they will no longer be able to eat with the children do to lack of space to ensure social distancing. Reducing staff will be necessary since common areas including bathrooms, break room and itinerant areas are small and only accommodate one or two staff members at a time.

**Space Configurations**

Classrooms will be rearranged to maximize use of the space with social distancing. Shared workstations, tables and other shared surfaces will be disinfected frequently throughout the day. Barriers will be utilized throughout the classroom when maintaining social distancing is not feasible.

**Ventilation**

Providers will increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols.

**Common Areas**

Providers will be provided time slots in which to use common work areas, fax machine and copier to limit the amount of people in these areas.

**Signage**

Hallways will be marked with tape and signs to reduce bi-directional foot traffic and to denote spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas.

Signs will be placed on doors, bulletin boards, common spaces and in the classrooms reminding people to stay home if sick, use face coverings whenever social distancing cannot be maintained and to remind people to social distance.

Signs will be posted on the symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you believe you are exposed. Signs will remind others to follow hand hygiene, how to properly wear, store and discard PPE as well as, cleaning and disinfection guidelines.

**Safety Drills**

All children will continue to use the back door of the classroom to exit the building for fire drills to ensure social distancing. Lockdown drills will be completed using social distancing in the classrooms and children will be taught to stay quiet.

**Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings will continue to occur virtually in most cases. Individual classroom staff meetings will occur weekly maintaining social distancing.

**Nutrition**

**Food Preparation and Meal Service**

Meals will continue to be cooked in the kitchen and delivered to the classrooms when prepared. Children will eat in their classrooms and one staff member in each classroom will plate each child’s meal wearing gloves to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils. Children will be discouraged from sharing food and beverages. Food preparation should not be done by the same staff who diaper children. Sinks used for food preparation should not be used for any other purposes. Providers should ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating. Providers should wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.

Social distancing will occur during mealtimes with the use of physical barriers (plexiglass, dividers) and tables being re-arranged.

Staff members will no longer be allowed to store their meals in the kitchen to eliminate traffic and maintain social distancing. Two additional refrigerators will be provided for staff to store meals. Staff will receive breaks to eat their lunch and will no longer be able to eat with the children in order to maintain social distancing requirements.

North Country Kids will communicate with families about nutrition and meals through a monthly calendar and reminders through the class dojo app. The agency confirms that we are in compliance with the Child Nutrition Program.

**Transportation**

Transportation for students with disabilities enrolled in 4410 programs are provided by the school district. School programs, however, are involved in the embarking and disembarking of students.

**Staggered Scheduling**

Community children will arrive at 8:00 am and be dismissed at 1:00 pm to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible. Children transported by a parent will be dropped off and picked up from the parent outside on the ramp. Busses will arrive at 8:10 am and pick up at 1:10pm. One bus will be unloaded at a time and temperature checks will be completed upon entering the classroom. In addition two of the three classrooms (Ms. Melissa and Ms. Sam) in the main building will enter and leave the building at the start and end of the day using the back door to eliminate traffic in the main hallway. Social distancing decals will be placed on the ramp outside to ensure children dropped off by parents stand six feet apart when entering and exiting the building. Students will wash their hands immediately after the health check is completed in the morning. Touchless hand sanitizers have been installed inside the door of each classroom, at the entrance of the building and in common areas including the gym and work station area.

**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING**

Our school community has faced unprecedented challenges as we have responded to the compounded difficultly of the global pandemic. We recognize that students known to be vulnerable, as well as those not previously enrolled, may return to instruction anxious, fearful, withdrawn, grieving, and/or unprepared to self-manage new or exacerbated negative behaviors. To support our students our school psychologist will push into the classrooms and implement the ***Second Step-Social Emotional*** curriculum which helps to reinforce positive pro-social skills for the children to use in their daily activities. Our staff is also trained in the Pyramid Model which offers daily lessons and tools to foster social emotional development and help with problem solving. In terms of supporting our staff we will have scheduled breaks and offer ongoing access to mindfulness and meditation practices for continuing education and mental health support.

**Teaching and Learning Models/School Schedules**

North Country Kids will create a comprehensive plan for a schedule that includes in-person instruction, re­mote instruction or a hybrid of both in-person and remote. Our plans will be clearly communicat­ed, with as much advance notice as practical, to students, families and staff.

To adhere to state and local health and safety guidelines and ensure social distancing practices, we have considered various reopening plans and schedules that stagger or alternate stu­dents’ return to campus. North Country Kids will collaborate with district stakeholders when considering alternate schedules. Mandatory teaching and learning requirements include providing clear opportunities for equitable instruction for all students; ensuring continuity of learning regardless of the instructional model used; providing standards-based instruction; ensuring substantive daily interaction between teach­ers and students; and clearly communicating information about instructional plans with parents and guardians.

Consideration of available space and student enrollment were given in developing the in person model. Schools are given the ability to restructure their programs using flexible scheduling models— taking advantage of in-person, remote, or hybrid learning models.

Per the New York State Department of Health guidance, plans address a combination of in-person instruction and remote learning to facilitate a phased-in approach or hybrid model, which may be necessary at various times throughout the 2020-2021 school year

**In Person Instruction**

After consideration of health and safety regulations we are unable to accommodate full day face to face instruction for all students. We do not have the physical square footage to accommodate the social distancing guidelines. We recognize that many if not all of our students will be unable to medically tolerate a mask, a mask will be a distraction and an obstruction to learning for many of our Pre-k population. The majority of our students will be unable to effectively take a mask on and off as well as handle a mask meeting sanitary guidelines. Limiting the number of students in the classroom will also limit the number of staff and allow us to keep cohorts together to reduce exposure. Our in person model for our 6:1:2 classrooms (Brittany O’Connell, Melissa Murphy, and Amanda Jackson’s classrooms) will follow a rotating schedule in which 6 of the 8 registered students will attend in person 14 of 20 school days each month. On the six home days, remote learning will be provided by the classroom teacher and telehealth sessions will be provided for related services. Our in person model for our two integrated classrooms (Sam Morse and Stephanie Parmeter) will consist of children attending two or three days per week alternating weeks.

**Hybrid Model of Instruction**

North Country Kids is planning to offer a hybrid model to operate our programs in September. We plan to provide face to face SCIS integrated programs alternate days with students attending two days one week and three days the following week from 8:00-1:00. Students will follow a M, W, F schedule one week while a second group attends T, TH and the following week Group 1 will attend M, W and group 2 T, TH, F. We will have approximately 8-9 students in attendance each day. When contemplating a change in class size we are using 20 square foot (SF) per person for a classroom, 5-15 SF at gymnasiums. Our 6:1:2 self contained classrooms will follow a staggered schedule where each student will attend school on site four days each week for three week out of the month and one week they will attend three days. Students will be assigned to the red, blue, green or yellow group and always come to school on the same set days to ease scheduling for parents. We will have 6 students in attendance each day with 1 teacher, two teaching assistants and a one on one aide if required. All classrooms will have a superintendents planning/disinfecting day on the third Wednesday of the month to allow time for cleaning, staff training on health and safety as well as virtual teaching, and planning/presenting for virtual teaching materials. On the opposite daysteachers will create authentic learning activities at home being mindful of screen time. Students not in attendance will receive all related services via Zoom as well as virtual links to literature, interactive boom cards to support cognitive concepts addressing goals and objectives indicated in the IEP. Learning activities and packets including crafts and other hands on activities will be sent home to be completed for home instruction days as well. For parents who are unable to provide transportation, learning materials will be delivered.

While children are in attendance on the school premise we will operate on “cohorts” (pre-assigned groups of children) with a maximum of 9 children per cohort, to limit the potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. We will have pre-assigned groups of students attending and navigating the classroom/motor room etc together. All surfaces and rooms will be properly cleaned in between cohorts. We will avoid centers that include multiple students using them at one time such as sensory tables. Each student will be provided with individual sets of materials while completing handwriting lessons, crafts etc. Teachers will refrain from practices that encourage physical contact such as hand-holding buddy systems.

Schedules for the use of the gym and outdoor area will be utilized to prevent intermingling across cohorts, to the greatest extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate social distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area).

Providers may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate social distancing is maintained, and appropriate PPE equipment is utilized.

Remote Instruction/Attendance

Teachers will report daily teacher student engagement with at­tendance. While this requirement is straightforward in an in-person setting, teachers and related service providers will make daily contact with students in remote or hybrid settings. Teachers and related service providers will meet their weekly frequency via zoom, as well as providing video’s and virtual activities. Attendance data will be reported for virtual instruction based on a combination of conversations with parents, viewing completed work sent home, parents submitting feedback via videos and pictures on the classroom DOJO and conducting direct telehealth zoom sessions. If the school is mandated to provide full home instruction due to COVID:

Teachers will provide a daily circle lesson via interactive zoom or video.

Teacher will offer Handwriting without Tears lessons three times weekly via zoom and video.

Music lessons will be presented weekly via zoom for each classroom from a certified Music Therapist.

To enhance social-emotional development weekly lessons from the Pyramid Model and Second Step will be provided virtually. Parents will be provided with behavioral strategies based on principles of applied behavior analysis, as well teaching strategies to meet their child’s individual needs.

Therapists will provide direct speech, OT, PT and Counseling via zoom to meet the IEP frequency. If the student cannot participate via telehealth or the family cannot accommodate the full frequency of telehealth supplemental virtual activities will be provided with telephonic contact with the parents to provide assistance.

Remote learning will focus heavily on educating parents how to engage with their child in fun meaningful ways. A variety of play schemes related to the thematic units will be provided in which parents can utilize items found in the home.

Google slides will be utilized to present daily life skills that include videos, games, and songs.

Google slides will be provided with step by step directions for the students to follow while completing craft projects.

Google forms will be utilized at the end of each week to survey parents regarding what lessons they enjoyed the most, what activities they successfully completed and what difficulties they are experiencing.

For the 6:1:2 classrooms two half hour segments of discrete trial training will be promoted to families. The classroom teacher will present video models and activities to address individual goals via boom learning which all parents have access to via our classroom dojo. Teachers will collect data on the child’s completion and accuracy of presented assignments.

Staff will work with families to develop an at home school schedule with visuals to support the student throughout their week.

Teachers will meet weekly with their team to develop strategies for lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in school. Our staff will use a variety of creative methods to reach out to students and their families who have not engaged in distance learning.

**Budget and Fiscal**

North Country Kids internal budgeting and expense reporting has been adjusted and expanded to forecast, track and account for COVID-19 related expenses. Our classroom enrollments have always been at maximum capacity. We are confident we will continue to have maximum enrollment, although some virtual learning will be necessary due to the square footage of our building and the ability to maintain proper social distancing.

**Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism**

Classroom teachers will be responsible for taking attendance each day for all children. For children on remote learning days the classroom teacher will speak to the family by phone or electronic system to ensure they received the remote activities and they understand the expectations. Teachers will take into consideration the demands being placed on families to provide remote learning for their child and will work through barriers with families and help provide solutions to make remote learning feasible for the family and child. If families are not responding the teacher will visit the home to ensure the child is safe and assist the family with obtaining additional supports. Classroom teachers will be remined of their responsibility as mandated reports and stress the importance of checking up on children whose families are not responding. The Chairperson will be contacted when families are not responding to remote learning or will not respond to the classroom teacher to determine a solution. All our families are currently English speaking.

**Technology and Connectivity**

Surveys have been sent home to gather information on the level of access students have to devices and high-speed broadband at their home. North Country Kids will work with the local school districts to obtain Wi-Fi and devices for remote learning for students and families who do not have the resources to seamlessly move to a remote learning model. All staff members have adequate high speech broadband and devices to complete their job functions. They also have access to computers at our building to be utilized at any time.

Packets of learning materials including crayons, scissors and markers will be provided to families in need for remote learning purposes. Learning packets containing crafts, handwriting without tears supplies and other learning worksheets will be delivered to the homes monthly to supplement each lesson and to be utilized on remote learning days. These packets will be a supplement in case families are having IT issues.

Data privacy and security will be ensured via the use of apps, such as Class Dojo and Google Classroom. Email consent forms will be obtained before email is utilized as a means of communicating.

**Teaching and Learning**

**Career and Technical Education**

NOTE: CTE does not specifically apply to 4410 programs except for the basic Learning Standards which can be achieved in remote, blended or in-person preschool instructional models. Any 853 programs engaged in a robust CTE programs, especially those with a “work based” learning component should describe below some of the modifications which will be required to help students to make continued progress, especially in periods of remote or blended learning.

**Athletics and extra-curricular activities**

NOTE: While athletics and extra-curricular activities are generally not part of any 4410 program and may have only limited manifestation in an 853 program. However, should such events or activities be contemplated and permitted by governmental authorities, our agency will comply completely with the guidance and requirements set forth in the DOH Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Should facilities under our control be used at any time by external community organizations, those groups will be required to follow State and local directives and health requirements regarding social distancing, hygiene, and sanitation.

**Special Education**

North Country Kids will ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our reopening plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist. Our goal is to provide in person learning for children with special needs to the greatest extend possible while maintaining safety regulations. Regardless of the service delivery model, information will be gathered to inform parents of their child’s progress on a regular basis. For remote learning, providers will be in constant communication with parents to determine progress for home instruction.

Related services will be provided in person and through virtual means whenever possible. One speech therapist will be assigned per classroom to protect the integrity of student cohorts. Two Physical Therapists and two Occupational Therapists will provide services to two or three classrooms each. They will wash hands and change PPE equipment and have extra clothes on hand to change before switching classes.

Our agency will communicate daily with parents in the preferred language and in their preferred mode of communication which could include electronic, phone contact, email, etc.

Collaboration will occur between the agency and CPSE committees to ensure the understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress and commitment to sharing resources. If families are not participating in the programming the CPSE Chairperson will be notified in a timely manner. Quarterly reports will be provided to demonstrate progress toward IEP goals and objectives.

North Country Kids will work with the CPSE committee to ensure children have access to assistive technology and any other equipment needed to meet the child’s unique needs.

**Staffing**

North Country Kids will ensure that all teachers, school and district leaders, and pupil personnel service professionals hold a valid and appropriate certificate for their assignment, as verified through NYSED.

Due to limited square footage children will attend three or four days per week in person limiting the number of children in each classroom each day. This will also reduce the number of one-on-one aides that we typically employ. We will have substitute teachers to address staffing needs for the allowable number of days, given their qualifications and teaching assignment. We also work closely with SUNY Plattsburgh educator preparation programs to identify appropriate ways in which student teachers can support classroom instruction.

Staff members who are requesting an accommodation from reporting for in person work due to concern about their own health must notify the Human Resources department and then comply with submitting requested information before the agency can determine if a reasonable accommodation can be made based on applicable law, regulation and the agency’s needs and resources.

**Teacher and Principal Evaluation System**

NOTE: This required section of the reopening plan is not applicable since 4410 programs are not subject to the specific laws and regulations regarding professional evaluation cited in the NYSED guidance.

**Student Teaching**

Since NYSED permits and encourages it, North Country Kids will welcome student teachers during the 2020/2021 school year to participate in person and/or remote instruction. Student Teachers will have training on all health and safety standards before they begin their placement.

**Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**

Kelly McCauley, Director will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All school staff and families will be provided contact information. She will be responsible to ensure continuous compliance with all aspects of the school’s reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activities return to normal levels.

The following videos and information will be shared with families and staff before reopening and will be periodically resent as reminders throughout the year.

Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 from CDC website

<https://www.cdc.gov/video/socialmedia/symptoms.mp4>

COVID-19 Parents supporting Children

<https://www.cdc.gov/video/socialmedia/316389_COVID19ParentsSupportingChildren-low-res.wmv>

What you need to know about handwashing

<https://www.cdc.gov/video/cdctv/handwashing/306898_WYKTK_Handwashing.mp4>

Demonstration of Donning (putting on) Personal Protective Equipment

<https://www.cdc.gov/video/socialmedia/316343_DonningPPE_final_lowres_2.wmv>

Key Times to Practice Social Distancing

<https://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/coronavirus/2020/23942394socialDistance.mp4>

Key Times to Wear a Cloth Face Covering

<https://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/coronavirus/2020/1084010840faceMask_clothface.mp4>

Key Thttps://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/coronavirus/2020/1533015330wash\_hands.mp4imes to Wash Your Hands

Key Times to Wear Gloves

<https://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/coronavirus/2020/1693816938wear_gloves.mp4>

Key Times to Clean and Sanitize Toys in Child Care Programs

<https://www.cdc.gov/wcms/video/low-res/coronavirus/2020/66906690clean_sanitize_childcare.mp4>

[**Guidance and Best Practices for Child Care Programs Operating During the COVID-19 Emergency"**](https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/FindTraining.aspx?Prog=VC) visit <https://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/> to register