



ABILITIES FIRST
ENRICHING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN
& ADULTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

School Re-Opening Plan

Submitted: 7/31/2020

Agency Name: Abilities First, Inc.

BEDS Code: 130801997760

Administrative Address: 167 Myers Corners Road, Suite 202, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

Program Site Addresses:

- Abilities First School Lagrange
24 Firemen's Way, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
- Abilities First School Straus Family Pavilion
59 Windsor Highway, New Windsor, NY 12553
- Abilities First Integrated Universal PreK
4327 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538
- Abilities First Preschool Wappingers Falls
167 Myers Corners Road, Suite 104, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
- Abilities First Preschool Executive Drive
121 Executive Drive, Suite 100, New Windsor, NY 12553
- Abilities First School Red Hook
103 West Market Street, Red Hook, NY 12574
- Abilities First School Violet Avenue
191 Violet Avenue, Hyde Park, NY 12601

Program(s) provided at the sites:

- ✓ 4410 (Pre-school Special Education
 - ✓ Special Class
 - ✓ Special Class in an Integrated Setting
 - ✓ Multi-Disciplinary Evaluations
- ✓ 853 (School Age Special Education
- ✓ Other: Full Day Universal Prekindergarten

Contact Person (Name, Title): Leann Coyle, VP of Educational Services

Contact Phone Number: (845) 464-2900

Contact Email Address: leanncoyle@abilitiesfirstny.org

Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted: www.abilitiesfirstny.org

INTRODUCTION

This plan was developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their July 16, 2020, document entitled: *Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York's Schools – Reopening Guidance*. This plan will be revised and updated as needed to adjust to changing public health conditions caused by the COVID-19 virus and all the new requirements and regulations which may emerge over time. Although Abilities First operates numerous preschool and school program sites, we chose to organize our plan in a single document that is tailored as necessary for individual site differences. We solicited input and involvement from the families we serve and our staff during the original drafting of our re-opening plan. A full list of the stakeholders and their titles that participated in development of this plan is included in the document. 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 the needs of our students, families, 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. Special Education
14. Staffing
15. Teacher and Principal Evaluation System
16. 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.

The following stakeholders have played an important role in the development of this plan to reopen our schools, and they will continue to assist in the revision of this plan as needed:

Bethany Ellis	Parent
Angela Hanratty	Parent
Lucy Fox	Parent
Erika Allen	Parent
Holly Fallone	Parent
Heather Rundle	Speech Therapist
Maria Rao	Speech Therapist
Kayleigh Cockburn	Special Education Teacher/Union Representative
Katie Ackerman	Physical Therapist
Brian White	Special Education Teacher
Karen Englund	Occupational Therapist
Jennifer Hart	Teacher
Phyllis Capone	Social Worker
Katherine Collins	Special Education Teacher
Amanda Peterson	Special Education Teacher
Rose Adams	Occupational Therapist
Laura Walsh Baker	Special Education Teacher
Diane Dolan	Administrative Assistant – Facilities
Kelly Miliambro	Administrative Assistant – AF Preschool – Myers Corners
Lisa Bixby	Administrative Assistant – AF School – Lagrange
Tracey Matarazzo	Executive Assistant
Sue Rae	Special Education Preschool Coordinator/UPK Director
Marci Meybohm	Nursing Coordinator of Children’s Services
Camille D’Amico	Assistant Principal – AF Preschool – Executive Drive
Jessica Lovinsky	Principal of AF School – Straus Family Pavilion
Kerri Brown	Principal of AF School – Lagrange
Harro Penk	Director of Information Technology
Paul Kowalski	Director of Facilities
Kim Ryder	Director of Finance
Leann Coyle	Vice President of Educational Services
Kelly Martinez	Vice President of Human Resources and Corporate Compliance
Melissa McCoy	Chief Advancement Officer
Ellen Griffin	Chief Finance and Administrative Officer
Jeffery Fox	President and Chief Executive Officer

1. COMMUNICATION/FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

REOPENING SCHOOLS – COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

As the Abilities First UPK, Preschools, and Schools transition to opening in the Fall of 2020, regular and frequent communication between Abilities First and families of students will be imperative, to provide assurance and relevant information.

The Reopening Communications Committee was established to develop a strategy that will meet the immediate and ongoing communication needs of families and all Stakeholders, regarding safety health guidelines, schedules, instruction, changes, news and events. The committee is made up of AF leadership, school administrators & staff, along with parents of Abilities First students.

Communication will include messaging Content, provided from AF leadership, school administration and other Reopening Committees, to support a variety of needs, such as: bilingual, distance learning, in-person (school based) learning, emerging changes and other relevant information. Each message will be released to families and stakeholders as deemed necessary and its urgency, through one or more of the Communication Portals. A concerted effort will be focused on ensuring the opportunity for two-way communication between families and AF, as timely as possible and at all levels of the organization. Information will be released and updated, as needed, in accordance with the SCHEDULE.

STAKEHOLDERS encompass all individuals and groups with relevant relationships and dependencies to effectively operating AF education programs.

- Current families
- New families
- Board of Directors
- Gov. Entities – School Districts
- State & local health agencies
- Community
- Vendors

CONTENT included in ongoing messaging will be relevant to emerging needs, within the categories defined in the Summary of the Guidance Document’s Provisions, released by NYSED on July 16, 2020.

- Health & Safety
- Facilities
- Nutrition
- Transportation
- Social-Emotional Well Being
- School Schedules
- Technology and Connectivity
- Teaching and Learning
- Bilingual Education and World Language

COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND PORTALS

Abilities First will utilize one, or a combination of its communication portals as deemed appropriate to disseminate information to families. The use of various portals allows for access to information in a timely, less timely, or long-term basis. Based on the stakeholder's preferences and resources, AF will target deliverables and reach either a broad or more targeted audience. The committee completed a preliminary evaluation of current portals. There will be an ongoing effort to evaluate communication portals and their effectiveness, and address enhancements. Training and login information for portals will be released to families prior to the opening of schools to ensure they are able to have access information. School administration will be gathering and/or verifying the records of all students prior to the opening, to ensure email and cell are available for all families to receive all released information timely.

- **Abilities First website** (www.abilitiesfirstny.org)

The website will maintain links to relevant state, local and agency information.

- **Town Hall Virtual Meetings:** If the NYS Governor announces that Schools are allowed to re-open, AF will host Town Hall Virtual Meetings staff and a separate one for families to review the re-opening plan for AF Schools & Pre-Schools.

- **Video**

- **Social Media**

- **Facebook** ABILITIES FIRST INC
- **Twitter** @ABILITIESF
- **Instagram** @ABILITIESF
- **LinkedIn** ABILITIES FIRST INC.

- **Classroom DOJO system** (contact your school administrator)

- **Mail** (contact your school administrator)

- **Abilities First Corporate Offices** 167 Myers Corners Road, Suite 202, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
- Abilities First School - Lagrange, 24 Firemen's Way, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603
- Abilities First School Straus Family Pavilion, 59 Windsor Highway, New Windsor, NY 12553
- Abilities First UPK - Hyde Park 4327 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538
- Abilities First Preschool - Wappingers Falls 167 Myers Corners Road, Suite 104, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
- Abilities First Preschool - Executive Drive (New Windsor) 121 Executive Drive, Suite 100, New Windsor, NY 12553
 - Abilities First School Red Hook -103 West Market Street, Red Hook, NY 12574
 - Abilities First School Violet Avenue -191 Violet Avenue, Hyde Park, 12601

- **Email** (info@abilitiesfirstny.org or contact your school administrator)

- **Abilities First Corporate Offices** info@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First School - Lagrange kerribrown@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First School Straus Family Pavilion - New Windsor jessicalovinsky@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First UPK - Hyde Park suerea@abilitiesfirstny.org

- Abilities First Preschool - Wappingers Falls leanncoyle@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First Preschool - New Windsor camillevining@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First School - Red Hook kerribrown@abilitiesfirstny.org
- Abilities First School - Violet Avenue kerribrown@abilitiesfirstny.org
- **Phone** (contact your school administrator)
 - **Abilities First Corporate Offices** 845-485-9803
 - Abilities First School - Lagrange 845-452-0774
 - Abilities First School Straus Family Pavilion - New Windsor 845-330-0356
 - Abilities First UPK - Hyde Park 845-698-1072
 - Abilities First Preschool - Wappingers Falls 845-298-2090
 - Abilities First Preschool - New Windsor 845-750-3224
 - Abilities First School - Red Hook 845-452-0774
 - Abilities First School - Violet Avenue 845-452-0774
- **Newsletters (external)**
- **Bulletin (internal)**

SCHEDULE

Following the launch of the Abilities First Reopening Plan on or about August 9th, there is an ongoing schedule for weekly and monthly communication from agency leadership, individual school sites, as well as each classroom environment, to parents, via the COMMUNICATION PORTALS.

- Reopening Plan Launch - will include the release of the reopening plan via communication portals. If the NYS Governor announces that Schools are allowed to re-open, in the same week, there will be an evening agency virtual Town Hall presentation of the plan. It will be recorded and posted to website, post-event. Subsequently, each school site administrator will host a virtual Town Hall for their families, which will be recorded and posted.
- Weekly - There will be one agency-wide and one site-specific school weekly update to families utilizing one or more communication portals.
- Monthly – A monthly summary, update, and projection will be released via the communication portals.
- Ongoing – As needed by emerging needs and/or changes, messaging will be released through the appropriate communication portal. The AF website will serve as an ongoing site to obtain historical and new information.

SUMMARY

As we approach the reopening, and moving forward, the communication strategy and its execution will continue to be monitored, evaluated and adjusted as deemed necessary.

Inquiries and suggestions regarding communications may be sent to the Chief Advancement Officer – Melissa McCoy at melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org or 845-464-3938

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- *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; local hospital capacity according to the local Department of Health*

HEALTH CHECKS

- Markings will be placed outside on the ground and in the entranceway 6' apart for those waiting in line for entrance to the building.

STAFF

- All Staff are to fill out screening questionnaire daily.
- All staff are to receive temperature checks upon arrival to the building before proceeding in.
- Self-monitor for symptoms throughout the day, see nurse immediately upon feeling ill.

VISITORS

- No visitors should enter the building unless determined necessary by the site supervisor. All meetings should be held outside or via virtual avenues when possible.
- Anyone entering the building will need to fill out a questionnaire, have their temperature checked, use hand sanitizer and wear a face cover.

STUDENTS

- Parents will be asked to fill out a screening questionnaire at home before sending their child to school. This form should be sent to school in their child's backpack once a week. Parents are required to call the school and inform the Nurse if any of the questions on the screening tool reflect a positive response to exposure, travel to restricted areas, fever, or symptoms related to COVID-19.
- Upon arrival to school, a temporal temperature check will be done and a visual health assessment by the school nurse.
- Staff to monitor for symptoms throughout the day, report to nurse immediately any signs of illness.
- Documentation of Pass or Fail with 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit being the dividing point.
- Once in classrooms students will wash their hands and their oxygen saturation will be checked with a pulse oximeter. SaO₂ of 90 or greater is desired. Documentation of a Pass or Fail will be done.

TEMPERATURE/USE OF PPE

- Temporal thermometer used to check all staff, students, parents, visitors (essential) upon entrance to the building. Students are to be checked again between 11:00am-12:00pm while in attendance.
- Nurse and trained staff taking temperature are to wear mask and goggles or face shield and gloves (only need to change gloves if physically touching a person)
- Alcohol wipes are to be used to clean thermometer and pulse oximeter between each use.

RELIANCE ON SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Visual inspection of student, staff, parent or visitor upon arrival and during temperature check.

HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Training and refreshers for staff on proper hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene.
- Visual Aides available to help educate students.
- Kid-friendly signs posted at sinks and around the building.
- Communication with the school community.

HAND HYGIENE

- Kid friendly signage posted at sinks and around the building encouraging hand washing and proper technique.
- Preferred method of Hand washing done with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Frequent handwashing throughout the day with emphasis on:
 - Upon entering the building and classrooms
 - At times of activity change
 - Using the restroom/ toileting
 - Meal times
 - After sneezing, wiping or blowing nose or coughing
 - Transition from outside
 - Removal of PPE
 - Anytime hands are visibly soiled
- Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing including soap, warm water and paper towels (preferably touch free dispensers).
- Touch free garbage cans available in all areas.
- Extra time in schedule to encourage frequent handwashing.
- Touch free hand sanitizers located in the lobby.
- Kid-friendly signage to be placed near sinks and hand sanitizers.

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

- Supply of tissues and touch-free garbage cans in each classroom.
- When tissue not available use the inside of elbow (Preferred method).
- Educate students on covering for coughs and sneezes. Kid-friendly signage posted in classrooms and social stories.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Ensure 6' distance between individuals unless safety or core function of the work activity requires shorter distance.
- Stagger arrival and departure times of students.
- Small groups of students with same teacher.

- Conducting some classes outside when weather permits.
- “Special” teachers (Ex: art, gym) going into rooms or outside (weather permitting) for instruction.
- Therapists assigned to 1-2 rooms and work in classroom.
- Color-coded areas of rooms with stickers for child to work in that area.
- Individual boxes/Ziploc bags of supplies, sensory items for each student.
- Directional arrows on the floor in hallways for traffic flow and areas to stand for social distancing.
- Meals served individually and eaten in the classrooms.
- Open windows for ventilation when possible.
- In person gatherings will be limited as much as possible with the use of tele or video conferencing.

MEDICALLY VULNERABLE/HIGH RISK GROUPS

- Consultation with parents and educational/treating team and administration regarding return to in person learning. If unable to return, then remote learning to continue.
- Additional PPE available for nurses and staff working with student.
- Limit number of staff working with student. 1:1 basis and therapists.
- Small number of students in class.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- PPE equipment readily available for staff but not limited to:
 - Masks, N95 masks, disposable gowns, gloves, face shields, goggles.
- As per NYSED guidance the minimal amount of PPE will remain on hand and available
- In case of a shortage of PPE or cleaning supplies, the school program will need to go back to remote learning.

AEROSOL GENERATING PROCEDURES

- Nebulizer treatments and suctioning to be administered in separate area (preferred is nurses office).
- Cleaning/Disinfecting is to be done of area and equipment after treatment or procedure
- Available PPE for nurses (masks, gowns, gloves, face shield).

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

- Proper face coverings include but not limited to surgical mask, cloth mask or bandana and must cover mouth and nose.
- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering.
- Students are to wear face coverings unless such covering will impair their physical or mental health or where such covering would present a challenge, distraction or obstruction to educational services and instruction.
- Visuals and social stories are to be used throughout the day and in lessons to assist the students with wearing face coverings.

- Face coverings must be worn by all individuals whenever they are within 6' of another person, in hallways, in restrooms and anywhere there is a group.
- Face coverings are to be worn by all parents, visitors entering the building.
- Face coverings will be provided to staff. They may also bring their own.
- Students are to bring masks from home; however, masks will be supplied to any student that doesn't have one.
- Signage showing mask usage to be put up at entrance ways and throughout the buildings
- Students will be given mask breaks throughout the school day.

MANAGEMENT OF ILL PERSONS

- Students with any signs of illness are to go to the nurse's office or designated area for evaluation.
- If a qualified medical professional is not available at the school, the ill student and/or staff member will be sent home for follow up with a health care provider.
- Students that have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 that are not related to another known health conditions are to be isolated.
- Any student suspected of having COVID-19 and awaiting transport home is to be isolated with a designated staff member using appropriate PPE.
- Once the student has gone home the area is to be closed off, windows/ doors opened if possible and wait as close to 24 hours as possible to clean and disinfect.
- 911 should be called in the event of worsening symptoms such as trouble breathing change in color, pain in chest.
- If a student or staff member report a positive COVID-19 test the school administrator or nursing coordinator is to contact DOH.
- Staff are to continuously monitor their health during the day. Staff that have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 that are not related to another documented health condition will be required to notify their supervisor, leave the worksite and follow up with their health care provider and human resources.

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

- Those students who don't have a documented chronic health condition must have a note from a Health Care Provider, or a negative COVID-19 test to return to school. In addition, there needs to be 48 hours with a resolution of symptoms.
- Staff will be required to adhere to the full isolation order provided to them by the local health department or health care provider before returning to work. An employee's return to work will be determined based on verification by the Human Resource Department that the quarantine is complete as well as criteria met as set forth by the CDC or other regulatory agency.

COVID-19 TESTING

- As per CDC guidelines COVID-19 testing will only be ordered by a health care provider or the DOH.
- A list of facilities performing COVID-19 tests will be made available to staff and families.

CONTACT TRACING

- Daily visitor Log will be kept at the reception area of each building along with questionnaire.
- Attendance records and student schedules of therapies, gym, art , etc., are to be kept by the teacher in each classroom.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

- Collaboration with DOH by school administrator and Nursing Coordinator.
- Nursing Dept to keep track of all student illnesses.
- School administrators are to keep an eye on absentee rate and the impact it has on the ability of the school to operate safely.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- All Cleaners, disinfectants & sanitizers must be approved by the EPA for the use against Covid-19.
- The entire school and playground must be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.
- Common areas and high use areas should be cleaned & disinfected multiple times a day.
- All interior and exterior railings, door handles, viewing windows, push bars & gate latches must be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.
- All Countertops, tables, desks & Chairs must be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.
- All Bathrooms, toilets, sinks, fixtures & handles will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times daily.
- All Kitchens & Food prep areas must be cleaned and disinfected multiple times daily including countertops, sinks, fixtures, handles, microwaves and refrigerators.
- All water Fountains will be closed.
- If a Disinfectant Fogging machine is used it will be done at the end of the day when no children or staff are present. Disinfectant Fogging Machines will not replace any daily cleaning or disinfectant schedule. They should only be used as a secondary precaution for disinfecting in areas where daily disinfecting is not feasible due to reachability or if large amounts of equipment are present. I.e. Sensory Gyms.
- All Playgrounds will be equipped with Hand Washing Stations. Hand Washing Stations must be cleaned at least once daily.
- All Classrooms, therapy rooms and offices should be free of clutter so that the proper disinfection can be achieved.
- All Cleaning & Disinfecting of the School, playgrounds & school vehicles must be tracked on a Cleaning & Disinfecting schedule log. All logs must be posted in the appropriate areas visible to anyone entering the school. Each area will be marked accordingly at the end of each day once disinfected.
- Nurses Office is to use as much available disposable items as possible. All beds, cots and equipment are to be cleaned after each use.
- Dressing Rooms/Changing Tables-Table paper is to be used for each student and area is to be disinfected after use.
- Staff Training will be done prior to opening and at least quarterly.

SAFETY DRILLS

- Safety drills done on a staggered schedule with 2 classrooms at a time participating.
- During Hybrid model drills are to be done on multiple days to involve all students.
- Shelter/Hold in Place can be done through training and visuals showing students “What We would do”.

TRAININGS

- Abilities First will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training will be conducted either remotely or in person. If in person training, it will be done in small groups social distancing and facial coverings will be required.
- Abilities First will ensure that all students are taught and trained on new protocols, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering usage, respiratory hygiene and social distancing. Visual aids and signage in classrooms and throughout the building.

- **Training topics for all personnel:**

Proper Hand washing

- Soap and warm running water for 20 secs is the preferred method; hand sanitizer may be used when soap and water not available www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html
- Proper cough and sneeze etiquette
- Social Distancing
- Provide training to staff on how to address working closely with students as part of everyday tasks www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html
- Operating Procedures
 - Entrance into the building
 - Cleaning procedures
- Staff or child who is sick or suspected of being sick www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html
- Proper Cleaning and Disinfecting procedures

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Proper type and when to use each item
- Cleaning and sanitizing of the face covering (if applicable)
- Provide training for staff and students on putting on, wearing, removing and discarding PPE www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html

COVID –19 RESOURCE PERSON

- Marci Meybohm, RN, Nursing Supervisor for Children’s Services
 - 845-452-0774, ext. 2528
 - marcimeybohm@abilitiesfirstny.org
- The resource person will be identified to the community as the resource person
- The resource person will have contact with DOH

PRIOR TO REOPENING

- Educate parents/guardians on watching for symptoms of COVID-19 through written information, parent groups and video links.
- Educate parents on health screening that needs to be done before their child leaves for school. Visual check, temperature check and health screening questionnaire.

3. FACILITIES

LEAD TESTING DUE IN 2020

- Lead testing will be performed for the 2020 school year.

ALTERATIONS MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Classroom seating configurations will be altered to provide the maximum social distancing with as close to 6 feet of separation as possible between students without changing or compromising any building code, fire codes and means of egress. Social distancing will clearly visible social and will include wall signage, floor markings and directional arrows.
- If the introduction of temporary and/or movable partitions are used the change will be submitted to OFP, the local municipality and/or code enforcement officials for review.
- Sneeze guards have been added to lobby receptionist areas.
- Hand sanitizers have been added to the main lobby areas.

SPACE EXPANSION

- No space expansions will be done. (e.g. building additions, lease space, transportable classroom units or spaces such as tents).
- If the need for space expansion arise alternative spaces all applicable governing agencies including but not limited to NYSED, OFP, and the local building department will be notified and a design professional will be consulted.

TENTS FOR ADDITIONAL SPACE

- No tents, temporary or permanent will be used.
- If the need for tents arise alternative spaces all applicable governing agencies including but not limited to NYSED, OFP, and the local building department will be notified, and a design professional will be consulted.

PLUMBING FACILITIES AND FIXTURES

Plumbing Facilities and Fixtures Mandatory Requirements:

- In areas where the minimal distancing requirement cannot be met toilet and sink fixtures will be taken out of order to meet the social distance requirements without compromising the minimum standards set forth by New York State Building Code.
- No temporary facilities will be utilized at this time. If temporary facilities are needed in the future a plan will be submitted for approval to OFP before installation.

Drinking Water Facilities:

- Water fountains will be taken out of service. Bottled drinking water will be provided.

VENTILATION

- The HVAC system will be run longer throughout the day and evenings to increase fresh air exchange
- High efficiency air filters will be installed and changed more frequently to increase air flow and filtration.
- Windows where applicable will be opened throughout the day to increase air flow.
- If any other air cleaning equipment is proposed it will be submitted to OFP for review and approval prior to installation.

4. NUTRITION

Abilities First Inc. is committed to providing all students with nutritious meals whether they attend school services in person or remotely and will complete the following action steps to ensure families have access to healthy meals:

- Our school programs will work closely with our partner school districts and school food authorities to ensure that students will have access to school meals each school day. We will provide a list of remote only students to our partner school districts to ensure that students are able to pick-up school meals. For students who attend in-person or a hybrid approach we continue to provide single serve school meals via our two School Food Authorities for our school sites.
- Staff and families will be trained on our changes to breakfast and lunch time procedures, safety, sanitation and/or food handling procedures as outlined in our health and safety protocols.
- A list of students with allergies will be created by the school nurse for each site and shared with pertinent staff. Foods that students are allergic to will be prohibited from the school site and communication will be provided to families and staff on banned items.
- Our school aged sites will designate classroom staff on a rotating basis to pick up meals from a specified location at each site. Staff will use food handling protocols such as washing hands before distributing meals to students. Students will practice social distancing during mealtimes and eat meals at their desk in the classroom. Students will wash their hands before and after each meal.
- Family style meals will be prohibited and we will use single serve meal options from our food vendors. For our preschool programs, one site students will bring their own lunches and the second site will use a school food authority to purchase single serve meals from.
- Our school programs and SFA's are also in compliance with the Child Nutrition Program.
- Our school will use a variety of communication methods to inform families about meal/snack issues via email, mail, telephone, classroom dojo, and the remind app if there any issues at their child school site in their specified home language.

5. TRANSPORTATION

- Abilities First Inc. will work with our partner school districts and families to ensure students are transported to and from in person school after reopening by taking the following action steps:
 - Arrival procedure changes- classroom staff will be called via the radio once a student's bus arrives by school district, staff will help transition students off of the bus individually, student's temperature will be taken and once cleared, they will wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the classroom. Families that choose to drop students off for arrival will be required to come ten minutes before buses to reduce crowding and maintain social distancing. Families will need to remain their car and a staff member will go to the car, take the child's temperature, and bring the child into the building.
 - Dismissal procedures - students will wash hands before leaving for the day. They will be escorted by their assigned staff for the day to the bus once their district bus arrives and is called on the radio. Families that choose to pick students up will be required to come ten minutes before buses release to reduce crowding and maintain social distancing. They will need to remain in their cars and a staff member will be bring the child to the car. Families will not need to sign students out, as the data will be collected by the front desk administrative assistant to reduce the number of visitors in the school building.
 - Communication will be provided to families via a variety of methods to explain that the length of time for students departing and arriving to school will be increased as we maintain social distance among staff and students to adhere to safety procedures during these times.
- Additionally, the following protocols will be developed and maintained at each site:
 - Obtain a district contact list of bus managers and share our school calendar, reopening plans, and communication protocols for the academic year.
 - Individual student schedules will be shared with districts and counties to set up busing.
 - Obtain each district's busing plan for transporting students to support transition during arrival and dismissal.
 - Create arrival and departure health and safety guidelines for students, visitors, and families who choose to pick up and drop off.
 - Create emergency protocols for behavior episodes that occur during arrival or dismissal.
 - Create family pick up and drop off procedures to ensure the safety of staff and students on site.
 - In the event of a shut down during the academic year, develop a transportation communication plan for all stakeholders for immediate student pick-up.

6. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Abilities First school programs are committed to prioritizing social emotional well-being - not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the social and emotional space to access academic content with confidence.

- Our goal is to ensure safe and effective care of our children, as well as our staff. School staff are trained in a variety of teaching and classroom management techniques to support students social emotional learning as well as behavior management within the school setting. In addition to these techniques the behavior support team is available to assist in the identification of needs, development of strategies, training and implementation. Handle with Care (HWC) is our current behavior management system- it teaches staff how to support a child with complex behavioral needs in a way that preserves the student's dignity and safety. HWC promotes a safer and more caring environment that is conducive to treatment and learning. Our plan also uses the Zones of Regulation to apply a systematic, cognitive behavioral approach to teach students to self-regulate their needs as well as their emotions and impulses in order to meet the demands of the environment and be successful socially. Abilities First's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTTS) includes use of evidence-based student-centered behavioral support. One component of the MTTS is training all school sites to utilize Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) throughout their programs. Staff recognize and understand that our students require additional time, instruction, and adult support to understand and adjust to change.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly difficult for many of our students. We are prepared to put all of the principles covered in PBIS to work to facilitate the return to school experience for students. Our commitment is to create emotionally and physically safe, supportive and engaging learning environments promoting all students' social and emotional well-being and development. The pandemic has influenced Abilities First in creating situations to help students practice empathy, create social bonds across distances and adapt to new learning experiences.
- As part of our phase-in plan, we will utilize this time to train all staff on the Zone of Regulations SEL curriculum, and interoceptive awareness and sensory supports for SEL. We will also have School administrators, teachers and support staff meet and create a list of already existing resources within the agency and community-based organizations and build upon them. In addition, this will be key time to determine students who might be at risk for needing mental health supports. Mental health professionals, school nurses and administrators will be prepared with tools and information to identify and meet these children's needs. This team will also review current plans to ensure that they are meeting the needs of each student and will supply suggestions if plans need to be revised. During the phase-in days staff will orient students and families virtually on the classroom and school environment. Staff will also orient students and families on wearing a mask and supply families with resources, videos and social stories to increase utilization and strategies for increasing tolerance. All staff will be trained on appropriate steps to take when there is a social emotional concern or when a mental health referral is warranted.
- Abilities First School programs will focus on a positive school climate that supports social/emotional wellness and a safe and respectful environment that enables students to build caring relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and academically succeed while supporting their physical health and well-being.
- All School and Preschool programs will remain committed to supporting all students and maintain our whole child commitment as well as equipping all staff to connect, heal, and build capacity to support our students. Supports will include resources from Identifying and delivering responsive SEL supports, including mental health check-ins, planning and goal setting, and social interactions as applicable.

- Additionally, all Abilities First employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers many free services including face-to-face and virtual counseling. Information about all social-emotional supports will be made available to Abilities First community through the Agency Webpage. We are committed to developing/making accessible family/caregiver-appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) content to be used during all phases of our re-entry.
- Every year we are faced with important transitions, and they will be even more important this fall, whether it's returning from continuous remote learning to in-person instruction in buildings, or a phased-in approach to in-person instruction. Abilities First schools will develop support transitions in a culturally responsive manner and engage students, families, and communities in the process of identifying needs and supports. Transitions take many forms and include returning to school in the fall, or dealing with the varying emotional needs as a result of the health pandemic

EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO COMING OUT OF QUARANTINE MAY INCLUDE:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine
- Other emotional or mental health changes

ADDRESSING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Establish/sustain a culture that supports and emphasizes mental health services available for faculty, staff, students and families
- Explore the use of Restorative Practices (use of healing/restorative circles for both staff and students)
- Assist in adequate training for staff/faculty as requested to assist them in understanding:
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making
 - The warning signs for quarantine related mental health needs
 - How to access crisis support and other mental health services
 - Promoting understanding of sensory and self – regulation strategies to support SEL

WHAT MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CAN DO IN SCHOOLS?

- Educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of mental health needs and how to obtain assistance
- Promote social emotional learning competency and build resilience
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making
- Encourage good physical health

- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports; facilitate the expansion of school-based mental health supports
- The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the disruption of routine may be stressful; fear and anxiety about a disease is a normal response and it can be overwhelming, causing strong emotions in adults and children. Effectively coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community, stronger.
- For Parents
 - Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers deal with any sort of crisis calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Research shows that your Central Nervous System IS THE INTERVENTION when it comes to providing a sense of ease in young people. This means making time for yourself so that your self-care “ritual” has a “trickle-down effect” of a calming presence and reassurance that things will be alright.

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and keeps the “stress response” engaged.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, go for a walk/run, or meditate
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy (i.e. reading a book, watching a comedy show/movie, knitting, coloring).
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- Practice gratitude and encourage your children to practice it as well. Each day, tell each other three things you feel grateful for.

COMMON SIGNS OF DISTRESS

- If you experience these feelings or behaviors for several days in a row and are unable to carry out normal responsibilities because of them, seek professional help.
- Feelings of numbness, disbelief, heightened anxiety, irrational fear
- Marked changes in appetite, energy, and activity levels
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, nightmares, or disturbing thoughts and images
- Emergence of physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach discomfort, body pains, or skin rashes
- Increased irritability and anger
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

2020 DUTCHESS COUNTY

HELPING OUR FAMILIES GUIDE

<https://www.astorservices.org/resources/dutchess-county-helping-our-families-guide/>

Mental Health Resources

Dutchess County Helpline: <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/DBCH/24-7-Services.htm>

Dutchess County Helpline: (845) 485-9700 Talk or Text

NYS Office of Mental Health Crisis Counselors

Call 1-800-273- TALK

Or text GOT5 to 741741

Dutchess County Stabilization Center

24/7 Help with substance, psychiatric and suicidal issues

(845) 485-9700

NYS Emotional Support Line

Call 1-844-863-9314

SAMHSA's National Helpline-<https://www.samhsa.gov/coronavirus>

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

Mental Health America Dutchess County

845-473-2500. <https://mhadutchess.org/>

Additional Mental Health Resources

NYS Office of Mental Health

Guide to Managing Stress and Anxiety during COVID-19

<https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/covid-19-managing-stress-anxiety.pdf>

Family Services

Rape Crisis / Crime Victims Hotline 845-452-7272

Domestic Violence Hotline 845-485-5550

Additional counseling services <http://familyservicesny.org/covid-19/>

Further resources will be made available to families in surrounding counties that are county specific to those families.

7. SCHOOL SCHEDULES

- Abilities First will begin the 2020-2021 school year with a phased in approach for students and utilize a hybrid model of in-person instruction and remote learning. A phased in approach will allow time for staff, parents, and students to make a gradual transition to the school again, allow time to address social and emotional well-being, and provide trainings and professional development.
- The framework for the hybrid model will be as follows:
 - Daily attendance will be at 50% capacity in each classroom to allow for social distancing of 6 feet.

- Students and staff will observe social distancing throughout the day and remain in their designated cohort.
 - Group A will attend in person on Monday and Tuesday and will participate in distance learning on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 8:30-2:30 pm for school programs, and 8:30-2:00 for preschool programs.
 - Group B will attend in person on Thursday and Friday and will participate in distance learning on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, from 8:30-2:30 pm for school programs, and 8:30-2:00 for preschool programs.
 - Group C will participate via remotely only, from 8:30-2:30 pm for school programs, and 8:30-2:00 for preschool programs.
 - Each facility will be closed on Wednesdays for deep cleaning
 - Only essential staff will be onsite, with non-essential staff working remotely.
 - Arrival of staff will be staggered to allow for social distancing
 - Therapists will be assigned per classroom to reduce movement between classrooms and to diminish the need to bring children to therapy offices.
 - Outdoor times will be scheduled to allow for one group to be back in their classrooms before another group leaves their classroom, reducing the number of people in hallways at a time.
- September 9-11: All students will participate in remote learning-each teacher will be responsible to provide live tours of classroom space and building to orient children to the school and changes that have occurred since some children left in March 2020. It will also be a time to address social distancing, the wearing of masks, and social and emotional well-being.
 - September 14-18: Remote learning combined with phased in attendance for students to gradually familiarize themselves with the school environment. Schedules will be determined at the building level, taking into consideration the assigned classroom, district, and transportation needs.
 - The schedule will be communicated to parents and guardians prior to the beginning of the school year.
 - September 21-All students participating either fully remotely or on the A or B schedule.
 - On-going assessment of the students and climate by building teams, leadership, and families will occur to determine when the above schedule needs to be modified, making it sure that access to instruction is equitable for all learners. These teams will include:
 - Health and Safety
 - Physical Plant
 - Instructional
 - Attendance
 - This data, in conjunction with the Department of Health and New York State Education Department will guide decision making as to the possibility of having to switch to all remote learning at any time during the school year. This framework allows us the flexibility to respond to the changing circumstances of the pandemic, support the health and safety of our students and staff, and ensure educational instruction is equitable and accessible for all.
 - The above schedule and any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders through our Website, Facebook page, email blasts, texts, postal mail, phone calls and specialized school communication applications such as Classroom Dojo, and in their primary language.

8. BUDGET AND FISCAL

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

For our extended 2020-21, remote services will be counted toward the 30 days of service requirement. Our 30 days are scheduled from July 6 – August 14, 2020. Our 10-month session calendar will be determined upon receipt of NYSED’s direction and authorization. Student enrollment is currently at full capacity. In order to facilitate new placements during this health crisis, we have created virtual tours of each school facility to demonstrate to parents and prospective students the quality of our facilities and strength of our program. We will also continue ongoing engagement with all students and families in accordance with the actions outlined in this plan. Ongoing communication with parents will inform satisfaction with services and/or concerns that will be addressed promptly to ensure parents and students feel comfortable and safe attending our program.

TUITION RATE SETTING

NYSED has already published interim rates for the 2020-21 school year. Although the department has recommended the current reconciliation process be discontinued, it has not yet been determined if that recommendation will be approved. Until we are notified of a change, we will operate under the existing expectations that rates will be reconciled under the existing rules in place. Abilities First has applied for economic relief under the Corona Virus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Paycheck Protection Program. We will continue to pursue any economic relief programs for which we are eligible. If our tuition reimbursement becomes insufficient to meet the additional costs of providing services during the COVID-19 emergency, we will notify NYSED that our programs are in jeopardy. We would also notify our Foundation and seek potential private support. All COVID-19 related expenses are being tracked by the finance department in a dedicated general ledger.

9. ATTENDANCE AND CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Abilities First Inc. understands the vital role that consistent attendance plays in the development of our students lives and will take the following action steps to collaborate with families to ensure students have access to learning remotely and in person:

- Our teachers will collect and document daily attendance using PowerSchool for students that attend live sessions, in person sessions, and from views on our classroom dojo videos for students who receive remote learning. Our Preschool programs will collect and document paper attendance for their sites regardless of how students attend school. Classroom dojo will also be utilized to document views of uploaded videos and lessons.
- Weekly parent advisory meetings will take place at each school site with the School Administrator to keep parents informed and listen to feedback from parents about any barriers they are experiencing whether they are in person or remote learning. Families will be provided training on how to use technological resources needed for remote learning. Families will also be provided mental health resources for support and referrals for additional help if applicable.

- Weekly meetings will be held by school site with teachers and therapists to discuss which students are not participating in remote learning and the reasons why. The school leader will strategize with stakeholders to reduce barriers students and families may have with accessing remote learning and take actions steps to ensure students are participating.
- The school leader will contact CPSE/CSE directors at student's home district if students are not participating in remote learning so that family contact can be established in the form of home visits, technology resources can be provided, and/or training can be provided to families on how to access remote resources.
- Our agency will contract with a third-party translation company to support two- way communication between families and school staff. Translators available through the school districts will also be utilized when needed.
- Staff will be provided a refresher trainer on Superintendent Conference Day of their mandated reporter responsibilities and how to contact the department of social services for suspected child abuse.
- Procedures for each site include:

Create attendance taking protocols for in person and remote learning by school site.

- Develop daily point of contact/ check in procedures.
- Conduct a needs assessment for family technology and Wi-Fi access for remote learning.
- Remote learning plans will be posted for families to access at home.
- Access to translation services for bi-lingual families remote or in person services.
- Therapist attendance documentation protocols by site.
- Recognize and provide families with support for barriers that may prevent in person or remote learning.

10. TECHNOLOGY AND CONNECTIVITY

- Access to technology for all students and staff is essential for the successful implementation of distance learning. Abilities First is committed to ongoing planning around technology to ensure equitable access for all, both in school and at home.
- The agency's IT department will identify a designated staff person to the educational programs to assist with the following:
 - Develop a questionnaire for families to collect information on device, network, and IT services availability for our students in their residence, i.e. do the families have network capability, do they have devices available for their student for use during school hours, and do they know/understand how to supervise/help their student with technology needs?
 - Each school site will continually assess staff and students access to devices and broadband via weekly remote learning meetings and follow up with families with action plans on where to access devices and broadband through their home school districts or our network.
 - Develop a questionnaire for staff to collect information from our teachers and other service providers (therapists, additional staff) at their residence on their ability to provide services in terms of devices, network, and training.

- School leaders at each site will contact the student’s home district CSE chair to provide access to district Chromebook and if the districts cannot provide the device then our agency will order or provide a device for the family. Staff can request devices through our IT department.
- For students who are awaiting a device or access to broadband, a mailed packet of curriculum materials will be sent home and instruction will be provided via the telephone by the classroom teacher or therapist.
- Conduct and maintain an inventory of equipment.
- Procure, manage and/or maintain hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.
- Work with individual sites to identify professional learning needs and develop and implement a training program for staff and parents. This will include:
 - Prerecorded videos
 - Live online training
 - Written instructions
 - In-person training/instruction
 - Use non-IT subject-matter experts and external sources for knowledge gaps
- Provide a “Helpdesk” system for parents, students, and teachers to report technical issues and access assistance with remote learning.
- Provide written policies on security practices, software usage, and online conduct.
- A mid-year survey will go out to families and staff to assess the effectiveness of the digital tools and platforms.
- Our school sites will continue to be flexible with our learning models and equitable access to instruction by communicating regularly with staff and students, using data to drive our decision-making, and aligning the needs of our students with the technological resources that meet their individual goals.

Additional considerations:

- Every school aged student will be connected to their home school district to gain access to a device for home use.
- Secure funding to assist in providing equipment, connectivity, software, and services to the preschool students.
- Secure funding to purchase additional materials for school locations; webcams, cameras, laptops, etc.
- Each teacher will create and maintain a classroom in Class Dojo. Therapists will create their own or join classrooms as co-teachers. A parent or guardian from each family will be added to the site.
- Lessons will be posted on Classroom Dojo in a timely manner that allows families flexibility to accessing them.
- The Zoom platform will be used deliver live instruction.
- Staff will conduct parent/teacher conferences, virtually, and be inclusive of all related therapy staff.
- At any time that students do not have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet, staff will provide families alternate methods to access materials and instruction, such as: picking up materials at school, dropping off materials to students’ homes, mailing packets home, etc.
- Resources will also be provided to families as to where they might be able to go for accessible Wi-Fi locations-local library, restaurants, department stores, etc.

- Any changes to our IT plan will be distributed to all families via our various methods outlined in the communication section of this guidance.

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS REGARDING AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY:

- Name/Address/Phone Number/Email (if available)
 - a. Do you have a dedicated computer or tablet for your student?
¿Tiene una computadora o tableta dedicada para su estudiante?
 - b. Does the device have a camera or webcam?
¿El dispositivo tiene una cámara o cámara web?
 - c. Do you have headphones that can work with your computer or laptop?
¿Tiene auriculares que pueden funcionar con su computadora o portátil?
 - d. Do you have WiFi available in your home?
¿Tiene WiFi disponible en su hogar?
 - e. Can you supervise your student while they are being instructed remotely?
¿Puede supervisar a su estudiante mientras se le instruye de forma remota?
 - f. Is your student able to participate in online sessions for 30 minutes or more continuously?
¿Su estudiante puede participar en sesiones en línea durante 30 minutos o más continuamente?
 - g. Do you or another family member consider themselves to be able to successfully use a computer or tablet, install software, and use conferencing software?
- Online version of Questionnaire:
<https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/3GB39VYrvc00x5kH0j0P8RDo0>

11. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Abilities First Inc recognizes the importance of providing our Preschool and School aged students with disabilities access to high quality teaching and learning during the public health crisis. Our plan will include teaching and learning in-person, remotely, and through a hybrid model, giving us the flexibility to shift between methods when needed. All instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and students will continue to work on the goals on their IEP's (Individualized Education Plans).
- All students will have access to instruction, whether it be in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid approach. There will be scheduled times for students to interact with their certified teacher and seek support daily. Our plan includes a clear communication plan for how students and their families can contact the school, teachers, administrators (ie: email, phone, text, online platform, website, etc.) for assistance with technology, instruction, or any other questions. Families will be offered training on how to use the learning platforms utilized by our schools, as well as alternate communication methods.
- Students will be screened using a readiness assessment created by our SEL committee for necessary additional supports to facilitate return to routines, instructional gaps, and school expectations. Students may need additional staff attention to behavioral supports, communication, goals and social-emotional well-being to help them re-adapt to school. Weekly meetings will be held at each school site with stakeholders to discuss individual student needs, any barriers that exists for families, and instructional supports that students

may need to access content. Diagnostic assessments will be administered within the first six weeks of school to determine student's academic, social, and emotional needs to align students with the appropriate tiered interventions where applicable.

- Students will be organized into three cohorts.
 - Group A attends in person sessions on Monday and Tuesday, and are remote Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30-2:30 pm. in the schools and 8:30-2:30 pm in the preschools.
 - Group B attends in person sessions on Thursday and Friday, and are remote Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30-2:30 pm. in the schools and 8:30-2:30 pm in the preschools.
 - Group C will participate fully remotely. Students that are remote only will attend live sessions that are taking place during in person sessions days as teachers go live in the classroom. Teachers and aides will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis. Students will be provided individual support from teacher aides, assistants, and Special Education teachers that are assigned to them for the day as we will be at least 50% capacity in the school building each day.
 - For our hybrid/remote plan live curriculum aligned lessons will be provided to school aged students via the Zoom platform for up to two hours each day for ELA, Math, and a skills period for health or social emotional learning for up to 30 minutes. Instructors will be provided a daily 30-minute prep period that can also be used for a weekly professional development meeting with the site supervisor. Each site will set their own times for when instruction can be provided to families via zoom. Families that are unable to join the live sessions will have access to pre-recorded zoom lessons that will be uploaded to classroom dojo or emailed to the families by 3 pm.
 - Students will be assigned to a learning model using the SEL readiness assessment, parent decision making, and health considerations. Students will be moved from a learning model based on readiness criteria, tiered supports, and parent requests. All models will be inclusive and culturally responsive by taking a student-centered approach to its design and implementation that aligns with student's Individual Education Plan goals.
 - Regular professional development will be provided to teachers and therapists on remote learning best practices through peer feedback, sharing technological resources, video modeling, and third-party training on topics that support the learning needs of our student population.

- **EARLY LEARNING-UPK PROGRAM**

The UPK Program will follow the Hyde Park school district's plan as closely as possible, implementing the same guidelines as described in this plan. Students will be taught by a certified teacher, and a Teacher Assistant will be utilized to oversee student learning centers. Staffing ratios will always be adhered to, as per Office of Children and Family Services policies. Volunteers, parents and service providers will be limited to only those essentially needed for the program. All visitors will adhere to our health and safety guidelines, which will be posted on our website and verbally shared before entry.

- **ADDITIONALLY:**

- a. Family style meals will not be practiced during this time

- b. Napping areas will be limited to those needing to sleep only, and rest mats will be cleaned daily, as well as assigned to a specific student. All other children will rest quietly at their seats
 - c. Students will be provided with their own supplies for center related activities. Physical contact will be discouraged, especially when traveling throughout the building to the playground or bussing.
 - d. Small cohorts of children in each classroom will be created, and the area cleaned when the group is finished. Floors will be marked to designate proper social distancing.
 - e. Children participating in distance learning will be provided with alternate means of instruction to minimize the amount of screen time. (packets mailed home, using household materials to participate in academic tasks, etc.)
 - f. Screenings shall be done before December 1, 2020. In the event school is closed due to COVID-19, new students will be screened as soon as possible. This also includes the Emergent Multilingual Learner language profile.
- **ABILITIES FIRST WILL TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION STEPS IN PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL REOPENING:**
 - a. Obtain curriculum license (the Unique Learning system by N2Y) for our school aged site in Poughkeepsie. This is currently being used at our site in New Windsor and was successfully utilized by students, families, and teachers remotely when we closed in March 2020.
 - b. Our teaching staff will be provided with training on how to use the curriculum through professional development prior to the reopening of school and families will also be provided with a tutorial on how to use the curriculum at home.
 - c. Our preschool programs will continue to use their pre-existing curriculums of Creative Curriculum and Tools of the Mind.
 - d. Training will be provided to our teaching staff to create curriculum maps that align with our hybrid approach to learning remotely or in person.
 - e. Teaching staff will be provided adequate prep time to create and design hybrid lesson plans for remote and in person learning.
 - f. Related service providers will also use a push in model for assigned caseload by classroom to reduce movement throughout the building.
 - g. For the first two weeks of school, there will be a gradual phase in of students with these weeks being virtual as we assess student social emotional, health, and parent decision on which students are ready to return to school, will remain remote, or a combination of both.
 - h. Students will be provided a virtual tour of the building and classrooms to see the changes that have been made in the building and given an opportunity for an in-person visit

12. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

- Students who attend our school to work program will attend two days a week for a period of two hours in-person. They will then attend remote work-based learning for a period of one hour weekly.
- The following modifications will be made:
 - Work based learning activities will be posted by the assigned teacher to match student transition plans and goals.

- A virtual work-based learning curriculum will be explored by the Transition Coordinator and School Principal for remote learning times.

13. SPECIAL EDUCATION

SERVICE PROVISION

Abilities First will provide in person classes to the greatest extent possible while meeting proper social distancing guidelines in each classroom and instructional space. We will offer a hybrid instructional model of a combination of in person and virtual learning for those students or cohorts who are unable to attend full time. In the case of medically fragile or high-risk students, or families who opt out of in-person instruction, or in the case of any students who have tested positive for COVID19 a virtual school model will be available for distance learning from home. Due to the high level of needs of the students we service in our special education programs, an emphasis on in-person instruction as the preferred modality will be reflected in all re-opening plans.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Abilities First recognizes the importance of parents as stakeholders in their children's safety, well-being and education. In order to help parents stay informed and fully aware of all-important news, decisions and opportunities to participate more fully in our programs and services, our agency has developed a comprehensive communication plan. The communication plan addresses the various modalities we have available to communicate with parents and the supports for our English language learning and Non-English-speaking families. The plan also addresses the frequency and schedule of our program updates, the methods of communication in an emergency and the preferences parents have in receiving and exchanging correspondence and conversation. Our goal is to provide consistent, clear, concise, meaningful and valuable information to families and help them stay closely connected to our administration, faculty and each other. Communications will be made available through our Website, Facebook page, social media platforms, email, texts, postal mail, phone calls and specialized school communication applications such as Classroom Dojo.

COLLABORATION WITH CSE/CPSE

As a community based special education program, Abilities First works closely with numerous school districts across several counties. In response to the need for increased communication and collaboration, our contact information for all Special Education Committee Chairpersons and administrative staff for each district will be updated regularly and we will be communicating our reopening plans and details as they are approved. The administrative team will respond to all feedback and questions from the districts and maintain open lines of communication throughout all phases of reopening. We will provide routine updates and immediate notifications of any changes to our program operations. Information about individual students about their families' preferences for the modality of their program and services will be provided as necessary.

ACCOMMODATIONS, MODIFICATIONS, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ETC.

The students in the Abilities First Programs will continue to receive all IEP mandated accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services and be provided with the

technology necessary to access the instructional program whenever possible. Our agency has sought grants and donations to help provide tablets and devices that connect students to their teachers and therapists when in-person services cannot be offered. Students who utilize assistive technology such as communication devices are able to take their devices home in order to utilize them to the fullest extent possible in all instructional scenarios.

DOCUMENTATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Abilities First programs and services are documented in a number of ways to enhance accountability, accuracy and efficacy. Our teachers and service providers enter attendance, track progress toward IEP goals and record the time and date of each therapy session in a variety of county mandated web-based platforms such as Frontline, Kinney Management Systems and McGuinness' CPSE Portal. Parents receive quarterly progress notes and each student is provided with an annual report and IEP review meeting. Families are provided all correspondence in their native language and offered translators whenever possible. This includes families who are hard of hearing or vision impaired.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Although it is our hope to be able to resume and continue in person instructional programs, Abilities First will follow all guidance and directives of NYSED, DOH and the CDC regarding best practice and recommended protocols. If such guidance indicates a need for an intermittent or extended school closure, all students will be provided programming and services through our distance learning model. Resources, training and technical support will be provided to help families access the distance learning program to the greatest extent possible. IEP's will reflect all contingencies and offer flexibility for students to receive services through multiple modalities to eliminate the need to repeatedly modify the IEP as circumstances affecting program operations may arise. Our contingency plans will also address staff shortages due to illness, interruption of distance learning due to technical issues, and activities and lessons for those who cannot access programming online.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The students in the Abilities First Programs have been assessed and determined eligible for special education services by their school districts' Special Education Committees. Our students have IEP's which reflect the decisions of the committees about the educational setting that will best meet their learning needs when their disabilities have been taken into careful consideration. Abilities First provides instructional programs in self-contained classrooms of various ratios as well as integrated opportunities in collaboration with the UPK program in Hyde Park, NY. We have classrooms located in local public school buildings as well as our own dedicated facilities. These settings were determined to be the appropriate and least restrictive setting for each student.

IEP IMPLEMENTATION

Abilities first will deliver mandated IEP services through a combination of instructional modalities until such a time when students can resume normal school schedules and attendance.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

Abilities First will adhere to all guidance from the Office of Special Education for the provision of services for students with disabilities. All mandated IEP services will be provided at the proper frequencies to the greatest extent possible.

PROGRESS MONITORING

All teachers and therapists will receive training on progress monitoring and reporting in Frontline. Data collection and analysis will be done as per the IEP and goals will be closely monitored. Continual professional development in this area will take place throughout the school year.

COMPENSATORY SERVICES

For families requesting compensatory services through their district, Abilities First will assess the related services availability to provide those services in the 2020-2021 school year. In the case where those services cannot be met, Abilities First will refer the student back to the school district so a service provider can be sought.

CHILD FIND

Any child displaying developmental needs and delays and/or possible disabilities will be properly referred to the school districts for a multidisciplinary evaluation.

INITIAL EVALUATION/REEVALUATION

Abilities First suspended our in-person evaluations due to the COVID 19 quarantine. As we phase in our in-person instructional program we will resume evaluation services. We will follow guidance from the state, counties and school districts regarding what type of modalities are acceptable forms of assessment whether that be through virtual evaluation and testing sessions, or in person. In person evaluations will resume as soon as safety protocols can be developed and established.

FAPE

The Abilities First Reopening Plan makes a commitment to offer a free, appropriate public education for all students. Wherever possible students will be served in the least restrictive setting and with consideration of each student's maximum potential.

Prior Written Notice and Procedural Safeguards- As always Abilities First will support and collaborate with school districts in obtaining all required consents, and adhering to all special education procedures.

ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

For our extended 2020-21, remote services will be counted toward the 30 days of service requirement. Our 30 days are scheduled from July 6 – August 14, 2020. Our 10-month session calendar will be determined upon receipt of NYSED’s direction and authorization.

TUITION RATE SETTING

NYSED has already published interim rates for the 2020-21 school year. Although the department has recommended the current reconciliation process be discontinued, it has not yet been determined if that recommendation will be approved. Until we are notified of a change, we will operate under the existing expectations that rates will be reconcile under the existing rules in place.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION AND SUPPORTS

Abilities First values all parents and families of English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners as partners in education and works to effectively involve them in the education of their children by:

- Providing parents with resources that enable them to make informed decisions about their children’s education in their preferred language
- Engaging parents as active participants and contributors to the school-based decision-making teams
- Utilizing the Emergent Multilingual Learners (EMLLs), profile process to allow the pre-kindergarteners in the UPK programs to assess the home language exposure of children. EMLLs are identified by the Profile as having exposure to a language other than English but are not assessed for English proficiency (which occurs in kindergarten when the ELL identification process is conducted).
- Implementing best practices in instructional planning for all students including differentiating and personalizing lessons, activities, home assignments, centers, materials, and read alouds, and developing gross and fine motor skills. Emergent multilingual learners are also provided differentiation based on their home languages
- Provide additional support for children from families who speak a language other than English at home
- Implement culturally responsive-sustaining education, in accordance with NYSED’s Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework.
- Follow The Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success provides guidance on: Ensuring the academic and social needs of ELLs/MLLs are met, and how these needs are to be addressed by educators and school leaders;
- Engaging ELLs/MLLs in the Next Generation Learning Standards instruction;
- Monitoring ELLs/MLLs’ content knowledge and new and home language development to inform instruction.
- Create and disseminate parent/guardian resources in the language(s) most frequently spoken by a school’s ELL/MLL population on how to access technology used in on-line education and post websites, and/ or via social media platforms.

- Connect parents to the New York State English Language Learner Parent Hotline: Parent Hotline if they have questions or concerns related to language access or other aspects of parents and students' educational rights. The Parent Hotline can be reached via phone at (800) 469-8224.

Recommendations to help English Language Learners fully access distance learning:

- Survey technical needs in preferred language
- Offer training in how to set up distance learning in preferred language
- Have a translator join in all tech support sessions, calls or home visits
- Set up a separate classroom dojo class for all the bilingual students to connect with a bilingual translator who can assist with all communications

14. STAFFING

- Abilities First, Inc. recognizes the value and importance of appropriate staffing to meet the unique educational needs of our students. School leadership will conduct assessments to determine staffing requirements that meet the needs of our students to ensure that educational goals are achieved, while supporting the health and safety of our students in the present environment.

TEACHING AND RELATED SERVICES

When staffing needs are identified, recruitment practices will continue using technology where possible to minimize exposures during the selection process.

- School leadership, in collaboration with Human Resources, will pursue recruitment of professionals who hold a valid and appropriate certificate for the identified assignment.
- Professional Certifications and/or licenses are verified prior to employment offer via OTI, TEACH, or NYSED's Office of the Professions.
- Teachers may be employed who are currently pursuing appropriate certification with an approved, valid plan of study. Supervisors will monitor the teacher's ongoing progress on their study plan to ensure compliance.
- Human Resources maintains a database of credentials to track expirations and ensure all professional staff's certifications remain active as required for their assignment.

SUBSTITUTE / INCIDENTAL TEACHING

Abilities First may employ substitute teachers to address staffing needs under the following parameters:

- Substitute teachers with a valid teaching certification may work in any capacity, for any number of days. If employed more than 40 days, they must be employed in an area for which they are certified.
- Substitute teachers working towards certification (enrolled in six semester hours or more per year) may also work in any capacity. If employed more than 40 days, they must be employed in an area for which they are seeking certification.
- Substitute teachers without certification may work no more than 40 days.

- For the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 crisis, this may be extended an additional 50 days for a total of 90 days total within the school year, with demonstration of a good faith recruitment search. In rare circumstances, the VP of Educational Services may hire a substitute beyond 90 days until the end of the school year, if they attest that they've conducted a good faith recruitment search there are still no available certified teachers in the subject area needed.

If necessary, the VP of Educational Services may assign certified teachers to teach a subject not covered by their certificate (incidental teaching), not to exceed ten (10) hours per week. Abilities First will only do so after extensive recruitment does not produce a qualified teacher, with documentation of such efforts.

15. TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM

As outlined within our Collective Bargaining Agreement, each employee shall have an annual performance evaluation by their supervisor within one month of the anniversary date of hire, and annually thereafter. Teachers may be observed twice per year: one unannounced, and one announced and preceded by ten school days' notice to the teacher. Improvement plans may be developed as a collaborative effort between the teacher and school administration, and if the teacher desires, a representative of AFEA.

If necessary, supervisors may perform an observation remotely by participating in a session of distance learning, under the same parameters outlined above. This will continue during our reopening phases to ensure continuity of quality services and continuation of professional development.

16. STUDENT TEACHING

Abilities First takes pride in its partnership with colleges and universities and will continue to foster the growth of special education professionals through its student teaching program. Where appropriate, student teachers may be utilized to support classroom instruction in-person or remotely. School leadership will partner with educator preparation programs to develop suitable ways to do so, in-person, remotely or using a hybrid approach.

Any student teacher participating in in-person learning is subject to all of the policies and procedures of existing staff and visitors, including but not limited to our health screening requirements, PPE, social distancing. A student teacher will always be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher who is the teacher of record.