

**SEARCH Day Program Re-entry Plan Revision**  
**Prepared for**  
**September 2020-21 School Year**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has required SEARCH Day Program to redesign many aspects of the educational environment for the students we serve. The SEARCH Day Program community has been summoned to adapt to continually evolving circumstances in order to maintain continuity in learning for students. As you may know, our school reopening plans must account for resuming in-person instruction and hybrid (both in-person and remote) learning. We must also be prepared to shift back to all virtual learning if circumstances and guidance changes during the 2020-21 school year.

During this Extended School Year (phase I), the faculty and students have been learning a significant amount about social distancing, enhanced sanitation practices, reducing transitions, reducing cross contamination, and the importance of face coverings. Besides the excitement of being together with our students again during ESY, a few important “take aways” of reopening the school to students and faculty on a limited basis is that we have learned that our students are highly resilient, cooperative with social distancing practices, and have adapted to new modified routines in school. In preparation for phase II, we have stayed in close contact with CDC, NJDOE, and local health department guidelines, collected various forms of information from our various stakeholders, such as the wider faculty, parents, and school districts, we have reviewed the use of all our campus facilities, and believe we have developed a plan for conducting school operations. Our reopening in September will safely provide a high-quality education to the students and maintain a healthy SEARCH Day Program community while the COVID-19 pandemic continues in our wider community. Importantly, the phase II plan safely increases the population of students on campus each day, maximizes the number of school days students attend each week, reduces the overall number of school days a student participates in remote learning from home, and maintains standards for social distancing and enhanced sanitizing practices.

Below, you will find highlights of our return to school beginning on Tuesday, September 1, 2020:

1. Highlights of our Parent Survey for 2020-2021 School Year indicate that 88% percent of parents are likely to send their child to the school building this fall; that access to a reliable internet connection and a laptop, tablet or computer is highly available to our students (96%, 98%); that approximately 22% of parents may choose to drive their children to school; that there was a near 50/50 split between parents who prefer alternating weeks and alternating days; and that 46% of parents reported that they may be unlikely to provide learning support to their children at home if distance learning continues.

In summary, we understand the need for parents to work; the need for our students to spend as much time with our trained faculty where their school day can be planned according to their individual needs; understandably parents find it challenging to support distance or remote learning; we also note that the data for our school suggests a high percentage of students will return to campus (where as other school district survey results suggest that 36%-47% of parents may not send their children to school), so we have to plan accordingly while maintaining social distancing, enhanced sanitizing practices.

2. In order to maintain social distancing practices and plan for as safe as possible school operations, the school day calendar will be arranged for each student to attend 4 days per week in-person with intermittent 3 days per week in-person. This schedule permits students to attend in-person instruction in-school either 3 or 4 days per week. The school will operate on an early dismissal schedule **(8:45-1:15)**. This type of school day schedule will permit all students to make regular and weekly contact with their teachers and therapists (70 % of schools days will be in-person for each student while in this phase; whereas with AB schedule each student will only be in-person 50% of school days); will keep to a minimum the number of school days using remote instruction for students; will permit teachers sufficient time to plan and implement remote learning activities for students; permit for social distancing and enhanced sanitation practices on campus; permit teachers, therapists and all personnel work day time to support remote learning for students.
3. The in-person school day will be 8:45am-1:15pm; remote instruction school day will plan for up to 4 ½ hours of instruction and a minimum of 2 hours based on the students' instructional, developmental, and emotional needs.
4. All social distancing practices, face coverings practices for students, faculty and visitors, enhanced sanitation practices, scheduling modifications, COVID screening and surveillance practices will continue.
5. The NJDOE has implored schools to create flexible arrangements to meet the instructional needs of students and consider learning arrangements that can be safely conducted when students are participating in-person and when students are working remotely from home.
  - a. With this in mind, we will be operating with the perspective that educational and related services are most appropriate when being delivered to students in-person and on-campus, and that we need to prepare a schedule that permits students as many school days on-campus as possible. Finally, we wanted to prepare a schedule that reduces our reliance on remote instruction days for students and parents and permits for as many students in-person instruction, as safely as possible.
  - b. We are anticipating that this schedule arrangement will offer students more frequent weekly in-person contact with teachers, related services providers and the faculty and facilitate student growth and progress. During ESY (phase I) we planned for approximately 50% of students receiving in-person instruction during the school day; in September (phase II) we are planning to safely receive approximately 70% of the student population each school day. For students and parents, this will reduce the number of related therapy services that will need to be planned for remote learning. In this phase, the more intermittent nature of remote learning school days will assist with students practicing the learning of new IEP related skills, offer opportunities to promote generalization of skills, and permit continuity in learning between school and home.
  - c. For remote learning days, teachers will continue planning IEP instructional activities; parent consultation, individualized instructional guidance and assistance; student participation in on-line learning platforms; and coordinating teacher prepared materials sent home. The faculty will be coordinating the instruction between the in-person and remote learning days to most efficiently address the teaching of new skills, reflect the current instructional needs of the student and accommodate for the level of parent or guardian support available. In preparation for September, teachers will be contacting

parents to design individual action plans for coordinating instruction that meets the needs of individual students, and parents, while maintaining a focus on learning IEP goals and objectives. It is anticipated that the continued use of remote instruction will assist in a transition to all remote instruction, in the event it becomes necessary.

6. Where necessary, it may be needed to consult with parents and school district case managers to request to the local school district to amend an IEP to reflect a changes in related services in order to meet a student's needs within the current scheduling circumstances beginning on September 1st. For example, modifying group occupational therapy services to group consult occupational therapy services due to limitations on peer-to-peer interactions. However, due to the increased number of students receiving in-person related services this will likely be unnecessary.
7. This phase II school schedule will be planned to continue until the circumstances and guidance from the NJDOE, local health department, etc. suggest that the school should consider alternatives to the current scheduling plans. The school administrative team will continue to closely monitor NJ DOE, Health Department, and community public health guidance to determine if/when modifications to school schedules need to be implemented, such as transitions to all in-person instruction or to all remote learning. We will plan to maintain this schedule unless circumstances dictate otherwise, and will provide information to parents and school districts regarding at least one month in advance; unless directed otherwise by guidance.
8. For parents who choose a full remote learning option, the school will maintain access to standards-based instruction and continue to make the best effort to ensure that every student participating in remote learning has access to the requisite educational technology, and the provision of related services to the greatest extent possible. The results of our parent survey suggest that approximately 10% of parents believe they will elect an all-remote option in September. The school will distribute written information to parents regarding the process for requesting a full-remote learning option and post such information on the school webpage. [www.searchdayprogram.com](http://www.searchdayprogram.com).

For further information regarding September school re-opening plans, please contact the school principal, Mike Carpino, at [mcarpino@searchdayprogram.com](mailto:mcarpino@searchdayprogram.com).