

Updated 11/20/2023



ASPIRE OF WESTERN NEW YORK, INC.

CENTER FOR LEARNING

REMOTE LEARNING PLAN OVERVIEW

FOR STUDENTS & PARENTS

GRADES PREK – 12

At Aspire of WNY's Center for Learning, continuity of learning is defined as the continuation of education in the event of a prolonged school closure or student absence. It is a critical component of school emergency management, as it promotes the continuation of teaching and learning despite circumstances that interrupt normal school attendance for one or more students. However, many considerations play a role in the development of distance learning programs, such as accessibility, type and quality of materials, and the length of time that this type of learning must be maintained. There are also a variety of potentially viable distance learning methods.

Guidelines for Students & Parents

What should students and parents do to ensure success?

- Ensure that you have login information for school email, Google Docs/Classroom, and Microsoft Teams
- Establish and communicate routines and expectations for the day
- If possible, define a specific physical space for your child's study
- Monitor communications from your children's teachers
- Monitor your child's stress or anxiety. Communicate with your child's teacher or related service providers
- Ensure you and your child engage in physical activities, mindfulness techniques, and other de-stressors.

Goals of Instructional Continuity:

- Provide all students with a continuity of learning that is accessible and clearly communicated
- Monitor and maintain student and family connections with school communities

Staff Availability:

We recognize that synchronous opportunities for student-teacher interaction are important to the teaching and learning process. We also realize the complexity of this in the virtual environment. All educators will be available and will identify how they will engage in the opportunity daily, timely, and through feedback. Acceptable platforms may include video-conferencing, conference calling, a discussion board, Classroom Dojo, Google Docs/classroom, Microsoft Teams, etc.

Important Contact Information

For questions about	Name	Contact
Director of Educational Services	Sarah Maciejewski	smaciejewski@aspirewny.org
Assignment or resource		The assigned teacher
AAC/Feeding and Swallowing	The assigned therapist or Sara Graham	sgraham@aspirewny.org
Preschool	Brenda Chmura	bchmura@aspirewny.org
School Age	Sarah Maciejewski	: sarah.maciejewski@aspirewny.org
Equipment Needs (wheelchairs, standers, lyers, orthotics)	Jacqueline Crandall (PT) Jennifer Molea (OT)	jcrandall@aspirewny.org jmolea@aspirewny.org
Medication/Health Concerns	Fenisha Harris (RN)	fharris@aspirewny.org
RSO/SEIT/EI	Gary Schneider Jenal Willard	gschneider@aspirewny.org jwillard@aspirewny.org
Day Care	Kevi Ann Simpson	kasimpson@aspirewny.org

Remote Learning Program Overview

Aspire of WNY has established a Remote Learning Program in case closure is necessary. This guide will help parents and caretakers understand how remote learning works, the technology support for remote learning, and guidelines for our students and parents.

Suppose the school is advised by the NYS Education Department or the Governor that a prolonged closure is necessary. In that case, the Director of Educational Services or the Vice President of Communications will alert families and faculty/staff by School Messenger. In this message, either of these parties will specify a start date for remote learning. Following their communication, the Teachers and Supervisors will provide families with specific instructions about remote learning, both academically and technologically.

Remote instruction may encompass non-digital and audio-based asynchronous and/or synchronous instruction where such instruction is more appropriate for a student’s educational needs.

- **Asynchronous:** students engage in learning without the direct presence (remote or in-person) of a teacher
- **Synchronous:** students engage in learning in the direct presence (remote or in-person) of a teacher in real-time

Action Plan for Students and Parents:

Aspire of WNY, Center for Learning, grades Pre-K – 12, will use the following primary means of communicating assignments, lessons, and activities with students (this includes education and related services):

- **Assignment packets** – Packets will be mailed home and/or emailed from teachers and therapists
- **Microsoft Teams Video Conferencing** – Teams is a video conferencing application (app) that allows teachers and students to have real-time together. Live video sessions can accommodate 2 to 100 participants. Students only need the app to participate. No sign-in is required
- **Facebook** – videos from therapists and teachers will be uploaded on a weekly basis

Technology

As appropriate, Aspire of WNY will work with home school districts to provide students with technology that will allow them to access materials. In addition, resources will be sent home with information on free Wi-Fi services.

Transportation

When a school district is in session, remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation must be provided to students attending religious and independent schools, charter schools, or students whose individualized education program (IEP) has placed them out of the district. If the change to remote instruction is due to a snow or other weather emergency, such a change will likely impact student transportation outside the district. Decisions not to transport need to be based on real-time information relevant to the safety of students, staff, and vehicles. School districts, religious and independent schools, charter schools, and other programs are encouraged and reminded to work together to ensure continuity of education while ensuring that transportation can be provided safely and efficiently.

State Aid Impact

Remote learning can count toward the minimum instructional requirements. So long as instruction provided is consistent with state regulations and district emergency remote instructional plans, remote instruction under emergency conditions may be reported to count towards both the 180-day minimum and the annual hourly instructional minimum of 900 for grades K – 6 and 990 for grades 7 – 12. Districts must report the number of instructional hours provided on these session days. For asynchronous instruction, in particular, it is important to accurately report the number of hours of instruction provided to all students.

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APPENDIX A
ASPIRE OF WNY, INC.
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
SCHOOL SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN
2023 – 2024

PURPOSE

The purpose of the School Safety and Emergency Response Plan is to have a formalized response to all aspects of any emergency that may occur within Aspire of WNY’s Educational Services Division, including the Center for Learning, the three community childcare center partnerships, and all community-based services. The plan was developed under the New York State Commissioner’s Regulation 155.17.

AGENCY-WIDE AND DIVISION-WIDE SAFETY TEAM MEMBERS

AGENCY-WIDE SAFETY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS

- Renee Filip – *Chief Executive Officer/President* Martha Farewell – *Executive Vice President of Operations*
- Melissa Roth – *Chief Human Resource Officer*
- Jennifer Ball – *Chief Fiscal Officer*
- Bob Petit – *Executive Vice President of Quality Assurance*
- Megan Rechin - *Vice President of Communication*

DIVISION-WIDE SCHOOL SAFETY RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS

- Vice President of Educational Services
- Sarah Maciejewski – *Director of Education/Education Supervisor*
- Brenda Chmura – *Preschool Education Supervisor*
- Kevi Ann Simpson – *Day Care Director*
- Gary Schneider – *Resource Coordinator*
- Jenal Willard – *Education Specialist*
- Jennifer Molea – *Occupational Therapy Supervisor*
- Jacquelyn Crandall – *Physical Therapy Supervisor*
- Sara Graham – *Speech Language Supervisor*
- William Hunt – *Office and Building Manager*
- Cheektowaga Police Liaison
- Local Cheektowaga Fire Department

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Division-Wide School Safety Plan shall be directly linked to the larger Agency-Wide Safety Plan when managing emergency preparedness and response at the Center for Learning, the three community childcare centers, and all community-based services. Agency and Division-Wide policies, procedures, and protocols will guide the development and implementation of the individual Emergency Response Plans.

In the event of an emergency or violent incident at the division level, the initial response to all emergencies will be by the School Emergency Response Team. Upon activation of the School

Emergency Response Team, the Chief Executive Officer or designee will be notified, and when appropriate, local emergency officials will also be notified.

Efforts may be supplemented by county and state resources. Local emergency officials play an important role in managing response actions in emergency situations. Assistance from these officials may be obtained by:

1. Creating a formal relationship with the Cheektowaga Police Department. An informal relationship does exist between the police department and Educational Services currently
2. Asking for their input in the planning process
3. Including them in the training of employees and students when appropriate
4. Using their expertise and experience when conducting drills, including tabletop exercises

DEFINITION OF AN EMERGENCY SITUATION (but not limited to)

- Active Shooter
- Unwanted Intruder
- Domestic Violence
- Bomb Threat
- Anthrax Threat
- Biological Release Threat
- Fire
- Verbal threats of violence by students, parents, and employees
- Physical threats of violence by students, parents, employees
- Violent Action within the building by students, parents, and employees
- Potential violence outside the surrounding area of the building
- Health and Safety issues such as a pandemic
- Severe Weather that prohibits leaving the building
- Loss of power
- Loss of water and sewer issues

SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN REVIEW AND COMMENT

The School Safety Plan will be reviewed and updated by the Division-Wide School Safety Response Team annually on or before July 1st of each year. Any updates to the plan will be shared with the Agency-Wide Safety Plan Team.

The plan will be posted on Aspire of WNY's website before approval. Parents and staff will be notified of where to locate the plan, with instructions on obtaining alternative access if needed. Parents and employees will also receive an email address or alternative to express concerns about the plan. The plan will be shared with Aspire of WNY's Board of Directors for approval of the plan.

A full copy of the Division-Wide School Safety Plan and any amendments will be posted on Aspire of WNY's website by October 1st.

GENERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

Identification of sites of potential emergency. They include:

- Aspire of WNY Center for Learning: 4635 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14225
- List of off-site locations
 - Jewish Community Center, 787 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14209
 - Jewish Community Center, 2640 North Forest, Getzville, NY 14068
 - Watch Me Grow, 2550 Union Road, Cheektowaga, NY 14227

Policies and Procedure for taking the following actions in response to an emergency where appropriate, including for but not limited to (**attached**):

- Emergency school closing
- Early dismissal
- Threat of student violence
- Evacuation – before, during, and after school hours, including overall security during evacuation
- Lockdown
- Lockout
- Shelter in place
- Hold in place

TRAINING

Employees will be trained annually and as needed regarding all emergency policies and procedures. Training should be done at the beginning of each new school year and should include formal exercises and tabletop activities. Employees will be expected to be well-versed in each policy and procedure as it pertains to them and the safety of their students. Each employee will be required to sign an attestation regarding their knowledge of each policy and procedure.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills should be conducted in accordance with regulations for each program within the Educational Service Division. The type and number of drills required for each school year or calendar year are outlined below:

New York State Education Department (NYSED) – Six (6) Emergency Evacuation drills and two (2) Lockdown drills must be completed between the first day of school and December 31st. Two (2) Emergency Evacuation drills and two (2) Lockdown drills must be completed between January 1st and the end of the regular school year.

There must also be **one (1) Emergency Evacuation** drill done in the month of July and the month of August during summer school.

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) – One (1) Emergency Evacuation drill per month during different times of the day; **Four (4) Lockdown** drills during the calendar year.

All drills must be recorded, including the date the drill took place, the time the drill started, and how long it took to evacuate from the building. Evacuation during drills must be in 3 minutes or less.

A review of each drill is critical to the safety planning process. Evaluating what worked well and what did not during a drill should lead to updated policies and procedures and additional staff training.

SECURITY CHECKLIST

It will be conducted at least quarterly to evaluate the safety of the building. Recommendations will be made to the Vice President of Educational Services regarding areas needing repair improvement. Areas that pose a security breach will be addressed, including creating a list of equipment that may be needed.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNICATION SEQUENCE

In the event of an emergency response, direct communication to first responders is made by any employee who is reporting an emergency. Once first responders are on site, the chain of command starts with the Vice President of Educational Services or designee. Walkie-talkies and cell phones are used between the Vice President, supervisors, and employees to convey critical information. Once first responders are on site, the Vice President or designee will immediately report emergency response to the Agency-wide response team and wait for additional direction and input.

Employees who provide services outside of the building will receive text messages providing information and additional directions.

Support staff oversee securing hard copies of student information needed to contact parents if computer and internet access are not immediately available. Supervisors will oversee communication with parents, which should be done as soon as possible but in a manner that does not create confusion. The message to parents should be clear and understandable, providing details such as what the emergency is/was and where they can pick up their child if regular transportation is not available.

The Agency-wide School Safety Response Team will do all media communication.

EVACUATION RELOCATION SITES

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Emergency evacuation site for the Center for Learning: Maryvale School District
Emergency evacuation site for the JCC Buffalo: Temple Beth Zion/American Red Cross
Emergency evacuation site for the JCC Getzville: Weinberg Campus
Emergency evacuation site for Watch Me Grow: McDonalds/Bellvue Fire Department

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CODE OF CONDUCT

See attached.

HEALTH SAFETY

Aspire of Western New York will ensure the health and safety of its students and employees by implementing current guidance from the New York State Department of Education, Erie County Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services, and New York State Department of Health.

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APPENDIX B

ASPIRE OF WNY, INC.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Code of Conduct

2023 – 2024

Code of Conduct and Behavior Management Approach

Aspire of WNY promotes a positive, nurturing, safe climate that provides our students with a supportive environment in which to learn, gain skills, and grow socially. Responsible behavior by students, parents, staff, and administrators is essential to achieving this goal.

Students are expected to:

- Be safe to themselves and how they treat others (no threat to harm others, no threats of weapons to school) to the best of their functional ability
- Be kind to the people within the school community
- Be responsible and do the best that they can
- Use language that is respectful of others

Parents are expected to:

- Respect staff and therapists
- Use appropriate language when on school property
- Recognize that the education of their children is a joint responsibility of the parents and the school community
- Send their children to school ready to participate and learn regularly and on time
- Provide written excuse for absences
- Know school rules and help their children understand them
- Build good relationships with the teachers, therapists, and other school personnel
- Seek appropriate medical/psychological services when needed
- Cooperate and assist in ensuring equipment is well-maintained and safe
- Work with school personnel on the development of behavior plans, when appropriate, to support safety
- Have a reliable plan in place for transporting their children home if they become ill or injured
- Notify schoolteachers of any significant changes in a child's family make-up or routine.
- Exemplify conduct that fosters civility, kindness, and acceptance towards all people

Staff are expected to:

- Maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity, which will strengthen students' self-concept and promote confidence to learn
- Be prepared to fulfill their job responsibilities
- Demonstrate interest and concern for the students
- Understand and abide by school policies and procedures
- Follow and implement all safety protocols and plans
- Communicate regularly with students and parents concerning expectations, growth, and achievements
- Alert supervisor and/or administration of any concerns or suggestions

Build positive relationships with parents, teachers, therapists, and other school personnel

- Maintain confidentiality when utilizing social media and texting
- Participate in staff development activities to enhance professional growth
- Be respectful of all cultures and traditions

Administrators are expected to:

- Promote a safe, orderly, and stimulating school environment, supporting active teaching and learning
- Maintain an environment that fosters open communication between parents, teachers, therapists, and other school personnel
- Evaluate all instructional and behavioral programs regularly
- Enforce the code of conduct and ensure that all situations are handled promptly and fairly
- Address all accusations of a student being teased, bullied, harassed, or threatened
- Be respectful of all cultures and traditions
- Participate in activities to enhance professional growth

This code of conduct helps establish a school-wide culture and promotes positive individual behavior supports while minimizing challenging behavior for all students.

- The successful implementation of a school-wide model includes support for staff as follows:
 - Administrative support of this formal policy
 - Collaboratively setting expectations and identifying goals
 - Allocation of resources
 - Ongoing professional development
 - Team approach
 - Partnerships with families

In accordance with the Dignity for All Students Act, Aspire of WNY's Center for Learning will maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

Student Use of Electronic Devices

Students are prohibited from using a cellular phone or other devices that disrupt the educational process.

Visitors to Aspire of WNY's Center for Learning

All visitors must abide by safety and security procedures communicated via emails, memos, and school messenger.

Public Conduct on School Property

All individuals on school property should conduct themselves respectfully and orderly. Per New York State law, smoking/vaping and weapon possession are prohibited anywhere on school property. The school may rescind authorization to be on school property for any visitor violating the public conduct rules.

Behavior Management Approach

Behavior management is based on the philosophy that an appropriate curriculum increases skill acquisition and the occurrence of positive behaviors, thus decreasing challenging behavior. Perfect behavior is not expected of students, and it is recognized that behavior challenges may occur.

The school utilizes a proactive approach to address challenging behaviors.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports or PBIS is a program that promotes and maximizes academic achievement and behavioral competence. It is a school-wide strategy for helping all our students achieve important social and learning goals. We know our students will excel when good behavior and good teaching come together.

We have established clear rules for the behaviors we expect in our school. We will explicitly teach these expectations to the students and reward them frequently with positive reinforcers, star charts, etc. The expectations for all students will be evident throughout our building, playground, cafetorium, gym, and classrooms. Our supervisors, teachers, and staff will utilize positive common language.

Implementing positive behavioral support(s) maximizes the development of desirable and adaptive behaviors rather than merely eliminating or reducing maladaptive ones. Staff teach and acknowledge appropriate behaviors that support school-wide expectations and establish a continuum of behavioral interventions when students need more intense support. Aspire prohibits using aversive, time-out, and unauthorized use of restraints.

Student supports include, but are not limited to:

- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Physical prompts and verbal cues
- Pictures and other visual representations
- Positive attention and feedback
- Picture schedules
- Problem-solving strategies
- Modeling
- Social and emotional skills training as part of the curriculum
- Specifically designed instruction and effective teaching
- Individualized materials
- Choices include preferred reinforcements
- Natural and logical consequences
- Redirecting and periods of reduced demand/calming
- Clear classroom rules and routines
- Supporting students in communicating to the best of their ability
- Regularly scheduled team meetings

Parent involvement is crucial to a student's learning. All team members, including parents/guardians, will be involved in team meetings. During these meetings, conversations regarding the student's educational program will be discussed, including social, emotional, physical, and management needs. If a student sees medical or healthcare professionals, a release of information for communication and coordination of services will be requested.

Behavior Support Plans are developed for those students who require a systematic approach to learning positive behaviors to maintain, increase, and maximize existing appropriate behaviors or extinguish maladaptive behaviors. When appropriate, parents, behavior specialists, therapists, classroom team members, and students will provide input throughout the development and implementation of the plan. The Behavior Support Plan shall include interventions developed to help achieve the student's educational goals and safeguards to protect safety, welfare, and civil rights. Data tracking and collection will be implemented to monitor progress toward developing positive behaviors. The primary goal is to assist students in finding safe, appropriate alternatives for maladaptive behaviors.

SCIP-R (Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention Revised) is a New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) approved program for crisis prevention and intervention of maladaptive behaviors. Aspire of WNY's Center for Learning proactively utilizes the SCIP-R strategies to encourage and support positive behaviors. SCIP-R utilizes non-verbal and verbal calming techniques, as well as physical interventions, during the following situations.

The student is:

- A danger to themselves
- A danger to another person
- Causing significant property damage

Physical interventions are documented, and parents will be notified when they are utilized. Physical interventions are not utilized with preschool students, daycare children, or those with a contraindication based on medical history.

Additional interventions that may be used:

- Voice control, which includes firm commands
- Time-limited planned ignoring of a specific behavior
- Positive reinforcement, which can include tiny amounts of food when necessary
- Physical prompts to interrupt or prevent a specific behavior
- Physical prompts that are medically necessary for the treatment or protection of the student
- Interventions medically necessary and well documented for the treatment or protection of the student, such as helmets, to protect the student from self-injurious behaviors
- Other similar interventions

Aspire of WNY **DOES NOT** allow such interventions as:

- Any form of noxious, painful, intrusive stimuli or activities such as hitting, slapping, kicking, shoving, grabbing, pinching, or other similar stimuli
- Any form of noxious, painful, or intrusive spray, including water or other mists, inhalants, or tastes
- Contingent food programs that include the denial or delay of the provision of meals or intentionally altering staple food or drink in order to make it distasteful
- Movement limitation used as a punishment, including but not limited to helmets and mechanical restraint devices
- Physical restraints unless there is a documented need by approved personnel for medical or safety reasons
- Blindfolds
- Withholding sleep, bedding, bathroom facilities, or clothing
- The placement of a student unsupervised or unobserved in a room from which the student cannot exit without assistance (exclusionary time out)
- White noise helmets or electric shock

This Code of Conduct must be reviewed at least annually and updated when necessary. Applicable regulations are to be addressed and included. Also, this policy must be disseminated annually to staff, and a summary will be available to parents.

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The overall goal is that these procedures will allow staff to actively engage in teaching and supporting the social-emotional development of our students and their educational success.