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**Procedures and Protocols
for Operating
During COVID19**

**School Year 2020 - 2021
July 24th, 2020**



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School Year 2020 - 2021 | Introduction

Our summer session provided us the opportunity to put into place procedures and practices to reopen the building for educational programming. We have been pleased by the experience and will use what we have learned as we move forward into the next school year. We are grateful and proud of the work that has been done by students, families and staff. Students have continued to experience and demonstrate growth in their educational programs. As we return for full instruction at the Benhaven Academy building, the guidance and considerations outlined in this document are grounded in the six guiding principles provided by Connecticut State Department of Education:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Allowing all students, the opportunity to return to school full time starting in the fall;
3. Monitoring the school, students, and staff and, when necessary, potentially canceling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators, and staff; and
6. Factoring into decisions about reopening, the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students when they are not in school

Benhaven Academy enters into planning understanding that health developments may influence decisions to transition to a different instructional model.

The school year plan that follows was developed based on the guidance of Connecticut State Department of Education and the CDC guidelines. Additionally, input and oversight were provided by Benhaven's nursing staff and medical director. We have worked closely with our facilities department to ensure the physical environment has been modified to provide a safe environment for all. We recognize the way we deliver instruction will continue to evolve, whether this means hybrid models of in-school and remote learning, partial day or partial week school experiences for students, or virtual learning.

We will strive to provide a high-quality program for students. Please know that you are welcome to contact us at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

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School Year 2020 - 2021 | Priorities

- **Fall Reopening Model:** Based on the guidance from the State Department of Education, Benhaven Academy is beginning in-person school classes on August 31, 2020. The school calendar can be found at the end of this document. The State Department of Health will continue to provide information to us on which of the three levels we as a state are currently experiencing. The plan to return as delineated throughout this guide is based on a Low Level. If the state advises that we are at a moderate level we will alter the plan to reduce the number of students in the building to 50% capacity and provide virtual learning for students when they are not in the building. Through surveying of parents, we have a group of parents who will opt for a hybrid model if numbers increase in the state. If the state advises we are at a High Level in person learning will be switched to virtual.
- **Suspending In-Person Classes:** The director, with guidance from Benhaven's medical director may suspend in-person classes at any time due to health & safety risks and would notify staff, parents and students via email.
- **Communication Plans:** Benhaven Academy communicated their school plans and associated safety protocols to staff and families by posting their plans on their school websites. Additionally, a copy of the document was sent to staff and families. Parents and staff have been asked to confirm that they have read the plan. The director will ensure detailed updates are provided any time critical information regarding policies, protocols, or health data changes. Updated information will be sent to families through the Academy parent email group. Each student's primary teacher will maintain communication with parents regarding their child's schedule and progress. Updated information will be sent to staff through their Benhaven email. Updated information may include a notification of any changed policies, need to cancel classes, or other changes or restrictions.
- **Data Collection:** Families will be contacted prior to reopening to assess whether their child will choose not to participate and instead continue with remote learning, and, if so, request the district is contacted to schedule a PPT.
- **Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate Requirements:** We recognize there are children whose participation in the school building is limited due to a verified medical reason. In addition, there are those with members of their families that are at risk who fear exposure. Parents and guardians may also voluntarily choose for students to temporarily engage in learning from home for a variety of other reasons. We understand these needs exist we also know how important having a routine and social opportunities are for the students at the Academy. We will continue to offer virtual options for students to continue remote learning from home.
- **Compliance Liaison:** The director appointed Melissa Soybel to be the school's COVID-19 Health & Safety Compliance Liaison.
 - The Liaison, will engage with students, parents, faculty, staff and administrators to answer questions about the health & safety requirements set out in this document and address questions about compliance.
 - The Liaison will support the implementation of these requirements, as well as the implementation of other school health & safety measures relating to COVID-19 and any additional guidance provided by the Department of Public Health.
 - **Melissa Soybel** can be contacted at msoybel@benhaven.org or at (203) 774-008 ext. 336

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Operation Plan

- **FACILITIES** Benhaven Academy will ensure coordination, collaboration and implementation of safe practices, including:
 - Arrival and departure processes;
 - Bathroom usage
 - Common area usage (such as lunch room, gymnasium)
 - Maximize ventilation with outdoor air
 - Use of outdoor instruction where safety conditions and physical space allow
 - Install no-touch entrances, exits, and bathroom fixtures when possible

- **Facilities: Classroom Layout**
 - Class Groups: Individual student needs will determine the exact student-to-teacher ratio. There will be no more than 15 students in a cohort.
 - Distancing Strategies: Appropriate social distancing strategies will be implemented allowing for at least six feet of physical distance between individuals.
 - We have increased the space between desks and added Plexiglass dividers to each area.
 - Each student will be designated personal space in their classroom with all their own materials.
 - Canopies will be available outside as an option for students to receive instruction as weather permits.
 - One-way traffic will be implemented at entry, staircases and in hallways via arrows on the floors.

- **Social Distancing:** Six-foot distancing will be maintained when feasible. In the cases where distancing is not possible, appropriate face coverings and other protection (such as Plexiglass shields) will be utilized. The only times when distancing may not be possible should be when staff members are:

- **Facilities: Reopening of Facilities Before First Day of Class**
 - School administrators will communicate cleaning and hygiene protocols as recommended by the CDC and comply with cleaning protocols through the DPH. These protocols will be adhered to by all staff and participants.

- **Facilities: Signs & Messages**
 - Signs on how to “Stop the Spread” are posted in easily seen locations at the entrance of the building and in restrooms.

- **Facilities: Ventilation**
 - Benhaven will comply with DPH Guidance for School Systems for the Operation of Central and non-Central Ventilation Systems during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Facilities: Training Related to Facilities**
 - In-person or online training that includes: social distancing; cleaning protocols; and hygiene practices will be required by all students and staff, and available to families who are interested. Training will be repeated as need and offered to others that enter the building.

- **Facilities: Bathroom Protocols**
 - Benhaven will comply with DPH guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of schools during COVID-19.
 - We have identified a separate bathroom near the isolation room, that would be used in conjunction with any individual who began experiencing symptoms while at school.
 - Specific bathrooms are assigned to each classroom.
 - Cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms consistent with CDC disinfecting and cleaning guidelines.

- When consistent with fire code, privacy considerations, and health and safety requirements, we are propping doors open.
- Each bathroom has a trashcan and paper towel roll by the door to allow students and staff to use in order to prevent from touching the handle with their hands.
- Touch-free single-use paper towel dispensers, garbage bins and faucets have been installed.

- **DAILY OPERATIONS**

- **Daily Operations: Flexibility & Compartmentalization of Protective Measures**

- Benhaven Academy has facility and operational protocols in place to react quickly to changing conditions.
- **Consistent Teams:** Benhaven Academy will prioritize keeping the same group of adults and students together as much as possible. There will be no more than 15 students in a cohort.

- **Daily Operations: Other Individuals Entering the School Building**

- Benhaven does not offer any before or after school clubs or activities.

- **CHILD NUTRITION**

- Benhaven Academy does not participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, milk or Afterschool Snack Programs.

- **TRANSPORTATION:** Benhaven Academy will be transporting in Benhaven vehicles.

- Face masks for driver and student, as described in the next section, are required on van rides, except among exempt individuals.
- The van will be cleaned and disinfected after each trip. Cleaning protocols are communicated to all staff, including measures to prevent harmful human exposure to chemicals.

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Health Practices and Protocol

STANDARD PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICES AND ADEQUATE SUPPLIES

- Benhaven has familiarized all participants of the standard public health practices used to prevent the spread of diseases.
 - These practices include, but are not limited to:
 - Social distancing
 - Frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer
 - Use of face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth
Respiratory and cough etiquette
 - Enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.
- The Academy has adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol (for staff and students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

● REPORTING ILLNESSES AND ADDRESSING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

● Staying at Home:

- Students and staff should inform the school if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, particularly if they had a known contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and have also had contact with the school population. They must stay home when they are sick, especially if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as fever and cough. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has provided guidance that confirms that, during a pandemic, it is permissible to ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus (such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.) Benhaven will maintain all information about employee or student illness as a confidential medical record.
 - Staff and students (or their parents and guardians) should perform a self-assessment prior to leaving for school to identify fever and other possible COVID-19 symptoms.
 - See below for sick protocols, including signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and temperature thresholds requiring students or staff to stay home.
 - In cases where close contact between educators and students is highly likely, schools will provide educators with surgical masks and face shields.
- **Social Distancing:** In conjunction with the considerations outlined above concerning classroom and hallway social distancing rules, staff and students should maintain social distancing between individuals to reduce the transmission of the virus per the public health guidelines at that time.
 - **Material Sharing:** Benhaven Academy will restrict the sharing of educational materials between individuals. These materials include, but are not limited to: books, computers, calculators, writing utensils, and art supplies.
 - Each student will be given a Chromebook and a bin of supplies labeled for their use only.
 - No two individuals will use the same materials in a given school day.
 - We will be appropriately cleaning, disinfecting, or sanitizing materials regularly.
 - **Wearing face coverings or masks:** All students and school personnel, unless otherwise exempt, must use a face mask while in the school building or in a school vehicle. This requirement also applies to anyone entering the building. Instructions for the use of face masks or coverings are available from the CDC. The following individuals are exempt from this requirement per CDC guidelines:
 - Anyone for whom use of a face mask would be contrary to his or her health or safety because of a medical condition;

- Anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

- **Exceptions to Wearing Face Coverings or Masks:**

- There will be times throughout the day (snack, lunch, outdoors, physical education) when students or staff do not have to wear masks if they are practicing social distancing.
- Exceptions may also be necessary for certain special education students.
- Teachers and staff, may remove their mask if they are properly socially distancing or remaining static behind a plexiglass barrier. Teacher or staff may remove their mask if they are working alone in their classroom or office.

Mask “breaks” will be offered to both staff and students throughout the day, as needed.

Providing face covering: Benhaven will provide face covering to any student or staff member who does not have one. Full protective gear will be provided to the nurse.

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Health Monitoring

- **Planning and Distribution of Information:** Staff and students should be monitoring themselves before coming to Benhaven. Students and staff should stay home and inform the nurse/administrator if they are sick with COVID-19 related symptoms, test positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed directly to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Individuals should stay home if you are experiencing any of the symptoms below. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:
 - Fever 100 or greater without fever reducing medication
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. If CDC updates this list we will pass along the information.

Parent Request: Each day before sending your child to school please ensure that they are healthy and symptom free. Being cautious minimizes putting other students or staff at risk or taking a chance which may result in having to close the school. If in doubt please have your child stay home and participate virtually. It may be helpful to use the self-checker tool provided by the CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

- **Attendance Monitoring:** Benhaven will actively monitor staff and student absenteeism to identify any trends that would suggest spread of illness such as COVID-19. **Students and staff absent due to illness should report if they are experience COVID-19 symptoms to the nurse/administrator.**

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Containment Plan

- **Response if an Individual Shows signs of COVID-19:** If a student becomes ill during the day the following protocol will be implemented.
 - Benhaven Academy will have a room where a student who exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be isolated while they wait for their parent/guardian or responsible party's arrival to pick them up from school.
 - Students will be attended while in the room.
 - The individual supervising the room will be equipped with proper PPE.
 - For the purposes of contact tracing, a log of all persons who entered the room will be kept.
 - The incident will be documented.
 - The school nurse supervisor will provide recommendations regarding student returning to school.
 - Parent will be responsible for following the recommendations of the medical staff before the student may return to the building.

- We will initiate recommended CDC cleaning procedures.

- We will continue to review CDC guidance to ensure compliance with most up to date information regarding containment.

- **Case Protocols and Notification:** If a student or staff member who has been present in school has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, the local health department will be notified immediately. In addition, the school director or designee (such as the school nurse or school medical advisor) has notification procedures that will be taken if a staff member or student is suspected of being sick, while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA, privacy expectations, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- **Protocols for Testing Positive for COVID-19:**
 - If a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-9 the entire class cohort should be quarantined for 14 days.
 - The students in the same cohort in addition to the teacher should be monitored under the guidance of the school nurse for COVID-19 symptoms over the 14 day period.
 - The classroom and associated common areas shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the most current CDC guidelines relating to COVID-19 affected areas.
 - For contact tracing purposes a 48 hour lookback prior to the onset of symptoms will be utilized to identify potential close contacts.

 - If a household contact of a student or teacher is a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case, that particular student or teacher should be removed from the class for a minimum of 14 days.
 - The remaining students should be monitored under the guidance of the school nurse for COVID-19 related symptoms over that time period.
 - The classroom and associated common areas shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the most current CDC guidelines relating to COVID-19 affected areas.
 - For contact tracing purposed a 48 hour lookback prior to the onset of symptoms will be utilized to identify potential close contacts.

 - A student or teacher with a laboratory confirmed cased of COVID-19 can return to school under one of the

following conditions:

- The person has had NO fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared).
- The person has a documented negative COVID-19 test result
- A note from a healthcare provider clearing them to safely return to the school program.

** This guidance is subject to change per direction of our medical director.*

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Cancellation of Classes, Remote Learning and Reopening Plans

- **School Closure and Reopening:** The decision to suspend or close a school program for some or all participants will be made by the director with guidance from Benhaven's medical director and the Wallingford Public Health Department. The director will notify and consult with the CSDE immediately if contemplating class cancellations.
- **Remote Learning:** Remote blended learning opportunities as delineated in each student's Individualized Continuity Plan will be implemented immediately upon cancellation of in school classes. ICPs were developed based on feedback provided by families, students, teachers, and administrators. Materials for continuity of learning are available to allow for school sessions to continue remotely.
- **Reopening Plan:** If class cancellations were initiated and a determination must be made about the approach to reopening, the administrator with guidance from the medical director will consult the most up-to-date decision tree related to schools from the CDC.

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Academics

Benhaven Academy is an Approved Private Special Education Placement. It follows all special education guidelines under IDEA to provide FAPE for all students including those who have been dually identified as both Special Education and English Language Learners (ELL)

• Special Education

- Benhaven is prepared with the understanding that there has been no waiver of requirements under the IDEA for provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). During COVID-19 school closures, schools were required to provide FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students, as well as those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students. Schools may not have been able to provide all services in the same manner that they are typically provided. Federal disability law allows for flexibility in determining how to meet the individualized needs of students receiving special education services.
- The plan treats students eligible for special education and other special populations as general education students first. Guidance and policies related to school reopening plans apply to all students, including students with special needs who qualify for individual education programs under IDEA. If students are unable to access the reopening plan as designed, we will facilitate individualized and alternative means of reentry based upon student need, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.
- Benhaven does not make programming decisions based on a student's disability category. However, the nature and/ or severity of a student's disability may require unique considerations. Protocols should consider the student's developmental level and skills.
- Benhaven will work with individual students to address mask and face covering, including cases where masks may need to be removed to provide appropriate services, and the approach to implementing any other possible mitigating strategy, including but not limited to maximum social distancing.

• English Learners (ELs)

- Benhaven communicates with parents and guardians that have limited proficiency in English in a language they understand as required by Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As during traditional schooling, communications during school closures due to COVID-19 may be provided through translation and/or interpretation.
- Benhaven provides ELs who are also identified as students with disabilities supports for their EL needs, as well as supports for their disabilities. During COVID-19, these dually identified students will continue to receive these supports. As in times with traditional schooling, dually identified students should have their language needs represented in their annual meetings about their IEP.

• Physical Education, Athletics, Arts, and Extracurricular Activities

- Benhaven follows all CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas and equipment used for physical education and physical activity, including recess.
- All fine arts and music curriculum is developed and implemented through the special education teacher and follows all CDC, state and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting materials used for instruction.
- Benhaven does not offer athletics or extracurricular activities.

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Family and Student Engagement

- **Family Support and Communication:** See Priorities on page 4
- **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health:**
 - Each student has a Plan for Success which addresses social emotion needs and provides strategies to support the student. The social worker will reach out to families to see if they would like additional support in coping with the current situation.
 - Staff will receive training on how to identify issues related to abuse and neglect in the context of the pandemic and comply with all mandated reporting requirements.
 - **After-school programming** is not provided at Benhaven Academy.

School Year 2020 - 2021 | Staffing and Personnel

- **Certification and Personnel Planning:** A full roster of staff is currently in place to meet the needs of the school.
- **Professional Development:** Training for staff will be provided for staff, before the beginning of the school year, that covers signs and symptoms of COVID-19, standard public health protocols, hygiene practices, PPE, reporting illnesses, and supporting SEL. Ongoing trainings will be planned as changes occur in recommendations from the Connecticut State Department of Education.

BENHAVEN ACADEMY | 2020-2021 CALENDAR

4 Independence Day

JULY '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

1 New Year's Day
18 M.L. King Day

19 Days

31 First Day of School

AUGUST '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

1 Day

FEBRUARY '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

15-16 Presidents' Break

18 Days

7 Labor Day
30 Professional Development

SEPTEMBER '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

20 Days

MARCH '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

3 Professional Development

22 Days

12 Columbus Day

OCTOBER '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

21 Days

APRIL '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

2 Good Friday
12-16 Spring Break

16 Days

3 Election Day
11 Veterans Day -PD
25 Early Release - noon
26-27 Thanksgiving Day

NOVEMBER '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

17 Days

MAY '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

31 Memorial Day

20 Days

23 Early Release - noon
24-31 Winter Break

DECEMBER '20						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

17 Days

JUNE '21						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

16 Last Day of School

12 Days

Box = No school
/ = early dismissal @ Noon

183 Days Total
Created 1/23/2020