Executive Summary

The May Center School provides a comprehensive school program for children with autism and developmental disabilities, using proven methods of treatment and teaching based on the latest clinical and applied research. Our mission is to provide students with the opportunity to learn skills and competencies which will allow them to reach their maximum potential. In spite of the public health crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the May Center remains dedicated to these standards.

Our school specializes in serving some of the most high needs students in the Commonwealth. May staff are working diligently to ensure that all students continue to have the opportunity to learn and excel. We have conducted surveys, evaluated the educational spaces in the facility, assessed the feasibility of obtaining personal protective equipment, and reviewed the individual needs of our students. The May Center has determined the best way to meet the needs of our students while ensuring the health and safety of students and staff is to begin the fall semester on September 14, 2020 with a hybrid model of instruction. The May Center has made significant changes in our school schedule and operating procedures to make a partial return to in-person learning for our students.

This plan is subject to change as new directives are issued by the Commonwealth and the public health situation evolves. COVID presents an unprecedented challenge. Unforeseen issues are a certainty, and we cannot perfectly predict how the situation will unfold. When new challenges arise, we are committed to working with our students and families to find solutions together.

Erica Kearney
ekearney@mayinstitute.org
August 14, 2020
Contents

Letter from the Executive Director ........................................................................................................ 2
In-person learning model ........................................................................................................................ 4
Hybrid learning model ............................................................................................................................. 4
Remote learning model ........................................................................................................................... 5
Out-of-school time plan .......................................................................................................................... 6
Student supports and professional learning ............................................................................................ 6
Other ....................................................................................................................................................... 7
Certification of health and safety requirements ....................................................................................... 7
Dear May Center Parents and Guardians,

The May Center School for Autism and Developmental Disabilities in West Springfield is pleased to share our fall re-opening plans. We have worked diligently in recent weeks and months to ensure all safety measures are in place. We have secured PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for staff, modified the classroom and school environments to ensure social distancing, enhanced our cleaning procedures to occur frequently throughout the day, and trained staff on all of these new protocols and more.

To ensure the health and safety of our students and staff, we have determined that beginning the fall semester on September 14, 2020 with a hybrid model of instruction is the best option at this time.

During this model of instruction, students will be assigned to either cohort A or cohort B and will receive services part-time in person and part-time remotely until it is safe to increase the number of students and staff in our school building. We will have half-days on Wednesdays to allow for us to thoroughly clean the school between cohorts. Each cohort will follow the schedule outlined below.

**Cohort A**

- **In-person instruction:** Monday (full day), Tuesday (full day), and Wednesday (half day)
- **Remote Learning:** Wednesday (half day), Thursday (full day), and Friday (full day)

**Cohort B**

- **In-person instruction:** Thursday (full day) and Friday (full day)
- **Remote Learning:** Monday (full day), Tuesday (full day), and Wednesday (full day)

You will receive information from us regarding your child’s schedule no later than August 24, 2020.

In order to provide us with additional information to assist us in finalizing our plan, we ask that you complete the following survey no later than August 16, 2020.

Click here: [School Re-Open Survey](#)

Please know that it is our goal to increase the in-person learning opportunities for all students as we navigate new requirements and expectations for both in-person and remote learning. Starting this fall, we will be required to report attendance to your school districts for both in-person and remote
learning. If your child does not participate in these activities as scheduled each day, we are required to notify the school district of their absence.

To prepare for these changes, we will begin scheduling times soon to discuss the delivery of services and work with you on developing a service delivery plan to best address the skills outlined in your child’s IEP. This plan will allow you to let us and your district know if you have specific challenges so we can work together with you, and your district if needed, to attempt to resolve them.

As we begin this new phase/schedule of learning for all of our students, we are committed to keeping you informed of our progress toward more in-person learning as appropriate. We appreciate your patience and understanding as move forward in a planful, safe manner.

If you would like to see our full re-entry plan, please visit our website. Our plan will be uploaded following submission to the state on August 14th at https://www.mayinstitute.org/autism-schools/west-springfield/our-school.html.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Erica R. Kearney

Erica R. Kearney, M.A., BCBA, LABA
Executive Director
May Center School for Autism and Developmental Disabilities
48 Capital Drive
West Springfield, MA 01089
413-785-5462
In-person learning model:

The May Center’s plan for in-person instruction provides for at least three feet between each workstation. Each student at the May Center has an individual cubby. Seats will be at least three feet apart to provide social distancing while students are sitting and working. Students from smaller classrooms will be assigned to workspaces throughout the school, such as the gym, lunchroom, and library in order to ensure appropriate distancing. These spaces will be closed to regular traffic.

Students will eat lunch in their classrooms to reduce congested areas such as the lunchroom. Other safety measures will include:

- Limiting the use of bathrooms to one person at a time
- Implementing a regular cleaning schedule of high touch point and access locations
- Rotation schedules for shared spaces such as the gym, apartment, and computer lab with scheduled cleaning between uses
- Blocking off every other computer in the computer lab to promote social distancing
- Limiting the number of people allowed in shared spaces at a given time
- Staggering PE times to limit the number of individuals in the gym
- Reduction of the arrival/departure bus line to one lane to ensure students can socially distance as they enter the building

We have purchased personal protective equipment (PPE) and developed procedures for cleaning and sanitizing. We have created an isolation room to temporarily house students who show symptoms of COVID-19, and staff have been trained in how to use PPE and address situations where individuals show symptoms.

Under this model, service delivery will be provided as outlined in each student’s individual IEP. Specialists will continue to consult and see students in the classrooms, and students will continue to receive services through their 1:1. Our modifications will not disrupt the delivery of these services. Students will sit six feet apart during groups sessions and shared areas of the school such as the gym and apartment will be used on a schedule to minimize how many people are in the location and allow for proper cleaning.

Students will continue to have opportunities to access the community to make progress towards their IEP goals. They will wear masks and social distance as appropriate, and we will conduct smaller trips rather than group trips in the community. Community access will also help in reducing the number of people in the school at one time and better allow social distancing.

Parents will have the choice to select in-person learning, a hybrid model, or fully remote learning services during this time.

Hybrid learning model:

The May Center plan for hybrid service delivery will divide students into two cohorts which will split time between remote learning and in-person instruction. Since students at the May Center have significant special needs, all students will benefit from some time in the building.
Group A will receive in-person instruction for a full-day schedule on Monday and Tuesday, and a half day on Wednesday; they will take part in remote learning for the second half of Wednesday and full days on Thursday and Friday.

Cleaning will take place on Wednesday afternoons in preparation for cohort B. These students will take part in remote learning for full days on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and will receive two full days of in-person instruction on Thursday and Friday. We recognize that some students have skill deficits that limit access to remote learning. These students will be assigned to cohort A as it provides two and a half days of in-person instruction versus the two days for cohort B. Cohort placement and schedule will be continuously evaluated to ensure efficacy and equity in service delivery.

On remote learning days, each student will continue to receive individualized structured activities and lessons developed which address IEP goals and objectives as outlined below for the remote learning plan. Services delivered by specialists (e.g., OT, PT, Speech) will be delivered when the students are in the building, except for those students whose parents have opted for remote learning only. Consult services will continue to take place between specialists and teachers and will also be available for parents to assist in the delivery of remote services and generalization of skills to the home. We will continue to work to safely increase the number of students in the building while continuously evaluating the best hybrid schedule to meet the unique needs of the students served.

Remote learning model:

The remote learning plan for the May Center will include creation of individualized remote learning lessons for all students served. All students at the school have IEPs and individualized instruction. In the remote learning plan, each student’s curriculum is designed to meet his or her individual IEP goals and needs and address the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

To carry out remote learning, the May Center school continues to use each student’s 1:1 staff member in coordination with the teacher and behavior specialist to create materials and develop activities and lessons to address student IEP goals. The delivery of instruction will include group and/or individual zoom lessons, instruction through technology such as Teachtown, IXL, Boom Cards, and online math and reading subscriptions which teach structured lessons tied to the MA curriculum frameworks. The staff will also produce video models and instructions, mailings containing materials which include computer-based activities based on IEP goals and objectives, worksheets and independent work, independent schedules, and generalization activities to practice skills taught in the home environment.

Other services outlined in the service delivery grid will also be provided through remote learning where appropriate, and activities and lessons will be created to address specialty IEP goals in the home. Consultation to parents and home team members, and consultation from specialists to the school staff and parents, or direct services to the students, will be provided to ensure all services are able to be delivered as outlined in the IEP. The May Center staff will also work closely with families to provide materials and supports that are appropriate for the individual needs of the students. Regular communication will occur to minimize interfering behaviors for students who have difficulty accessing academics in this format, especially without having additional support available in the home.

A plan has been established to track attendance to Zoom sessions and track data during those sessions, as well as to work with families to collect data on independent generalization activities to measure
engagement. The staff will also use this data collection to measure progress which will then be reported in quarterly progress reports. The May Center staff will also maintain continuous communication with parents through weekly phone calls, email communication, and offer weekly office hours which can be used by the parents to support their participation in delivery of remote services. This will also allow the team to maintain continuous communication in the event that adaptations and modifications are needed to service delivery and teaching methodologies to ensure the student is making the highest level of progress possible. The May Center will continue to work with the sending school districts to provide all necessary translation and interpreter services parents may need.

Out-of-school time plan:

The May Center school will continue to provide family consultation outside of school hours. This consultation is in addition to the support and communication during the school day. Resources have also been provided to families to work on generalization of skills to allow students to practice activities in functional settings. These resources include: academic subscription services (e.g., IXL, Teachtown, etc.); sending home materials for ADL and vocational skills (e.g., Swiffer, iPad stand, cooking utensils); and instructional videos on how to practice generalization of skills into the home and community.

Student supports and professional learning:

(a) Safety, Wellness, and Social Emotional Supports

The May Center School is committed to the safety, wellness, and emotional well-being of our students, families, and staff. The May Center School has bolstered our support network in alignment with DESE recommendations to ensure the following: engaging families as partners with cultural competency; supporting staff to manage uncertainty and wellness; preparing to allocate time to for classroom and school culture-building; and assuming and planning for an increase in mental health needs.

Communication with staff is frequent, transparent, and sensitive to change. Daily and weekly opportunities to engage with school administration, management, and Human Resources have guided decisions throughout the pandemic and will continue to be essential to our fall plans. The May Center school teaching staff need to feel empowered and safe in their environment in order to create a positive classroom environment. All staff have been provided with school-based trainings as well as more intensive, professional emotional health resources. All levels of staff are engaged in these conversations.

Culturally competent communication with families occurs weekly and more frequently, as needed. Our staff are trained to recognize the impact of social/emotional stress that may limit student access to learning. The Parent Advisory Committee remains a resource to provide opportunities for connection and support. Staff continue to engage in May Center School diversity and inclusion trainings to react sensitively to the impact the recent past has had on families of color.

The May Center School has been preparing our student, family, and teaching community for a “new normal” including: developmentally appropriate social stories; mask-wearing tolerance programs; opportunities to discuss changes during individualized service delivery; teacher-led instruction on social distancing and other changes to the environment; pre-teaching and reviewing new student routines; and many other individualized supports. Our program implements three key elements for social
emotional learning for all students – relationship-building, self-awareness, and self-management. These elements are addressed school wide and in individualized behavior support plans.

The May Center School is committed to the idea that all members of the school community share responsibility for the social emotional needs and mental health of students and the educators who support them. Throughout the pandemic and when planning for fall, the interdisciplinary team ensured continuity of services.

(b) Planning and Instruction

Student programming is individualized and supports will continue for all team members to fully implement the IEP. The team will ensure students’ families have the resources, training, and capability to implement instruction. Adjustments and support will be allocated as necessary. The classroom staff and families continue to communicate to ensure instruction is appropriate and accessible to students, using parent feedback to make modifications and accommodations as necessary.

(c) Assessment

The May Center School will continue its current practice, working with sending districts and families to ensure compliance with annual review Team meetings and reevaluations, including appropriate assessments. The May Center School follows the guiding principles set for by DESE including: 1) student-centeredness; 2) communication and transparency; 3) parent engagement; and 4) documentation.

(d) Intervention

The May Center School’s individualized, ABA programming is designed to identify, measure through data collection, and modify interventions for both academic and behavioral objectives.

Other: Each student’s district is responsible for organizing and providing transportation. The May Center works with districts by providing school schedules to aid in the scheduling process. The May Center screens students when they arrive at the school each morning.

Certification of health and safety requirements:

The May Center Schools meet the final health and safety requirements issued by DESE. We will implement systems and procedures to support state guidelines. The schools have a Prevention Plan, Communication Plan and Standard Operating Processes to address the following areas of need.

Mask/Face Coverings
As the primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory, masks or face coverings are among the most critical components of risk reduction. All staff must wear face masks as appropriate to the programming and status of their program. Programs must encourage the wearing of masks or cloth face
coverings during the school day by all students who can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks. There is signage throughout the school building(s). Students will have at least two mask breaks per day (e.g., mealtime and recess).

**PPE Supplies**

The organization maintains a supply of PPE and tracks the distribution of the PPE to the various programs.

**Physical Distancing**

The school will maintain at least three feet of distance and limit contact between individuals and groups, whenever possible. Where appropriate, we will use visual cues such as tape on floor; markings to show spacing will be used. Signage is posted throughout the building.

**Cohorts/Group Size**

Group sizes must be restricted to the size/space of a room ensuring at least six feet of social distancing. Each student will have an assigned desk in the classroom.

**Screenings/Entry**

Screening are required for all students, staff, and visitors. All persons must be screened before they are permitted to enter the building. Families are required to conduct their screening remotely prior to arrival at the location. Upon arrival at the location, staff must conduct a visual inspection of each student for signs of illness associated with COVID 19.

**Communication with Families**

The school will ensure a robust two-way communication with all families including email, phone, and One Call texting for group announcements.

**Monitoring for COVID-19 Symptoms**

Staff must monitor themselves for symptoms daily and students, with the assistance of families, must also be monitored daily for symptoms. Staff and students must stay home if feeling unwell. Protocols will be strictly adhered to for any positive or presumed positive cases of COVID 19 within the school community.

**Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer**

All employees and students will have access to handwashing stations or hand sanitizer. Hand Sanitizer (including but not limited to at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer) will be supplied by the Center. Handwashing routines will be built into the school day. Signage is utilized throughout the school.

**Isolation Room(s)**

If a student becomes symptomatic while at the program, the student will be isolated. Programs will have a designated space to isolate an individual who may become sick. This space is separate from the school nurse’s office which is used for routine medical care.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

All employees will have access to cleaning supplies such as disinfecting spray or wipes, paper towels, etc. All cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting solutions will be stored in a safe place that is accessible to staff in each area of the programs, secured where appropriate for the individuals. High
Touch points: all programs will ensure high touch points are disinfected at a minimum once a shift. All day services will disinfect after all students and employees have left for the day. Disinfection may also occur more frequently as appropriate due to an incident, infection or as per CDC or BOH recommendations. Sites may close to conduct disinfection of a site due to exposure from a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

Ventilation
The schools will work to increase outdoor air ventilation instead of using recirculated air and increase air filtration as much as possible for the ventilation and filtration system. Facilities perform the following to the HVAC Systems:
  a. Check the operation of all HVAC equipment to ensure it is working properly.
  b. Clean and disinfect all evaporator coils with a hospital-grade coil cleaner.
  c. Check that all the outside air dampers are working properly so we can make sure the HVAC systems are suppling the building with the maximum outside air possible for the unit.
  d. Check that the general and toilet exhaust fans are working properly and scheduled to run when the building is occupied.

Transportation
To the extent possible, students will remain with the same group each day. Students will be requested to wear masks or face coverings during transport. Physical distancing should be maintained while in transit, maximize space between riders (e.g., one rider per seat in every other row).