



The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School
19 Harrison Avenue
Roseland, NJ 07068

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County: Essex
Name of APSSD: The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School
Chief School Administrator: Linda Lucas
School Phone: 862-210-8781

School Health-Related Closure Plan: September 7, 2023

September 17, 2023

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School is an out-of-district placement for students ages 3 – 10 with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are 4 students who are classified as a Preschooler with a Disability and 22 students in our primary classes who can be served in a classroom for the Multiply Disabled. There are no students in the school who are medically fragile.

Each child is currently receiving an individualized academic and therapeutic program and remote plans are prepared for remote learning at home. In the event of a school health-related closure, the individualized remote plans will be emailed/texted home to families and will be worked on by families/caregivers, in coordination with our teaching and therapy staff, via various electronic, phone, and video platforms.

Component 1- Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction:

In the event of a school health-related closure, remote packets are prepared and a pick-up time will be arranged with families. The remote packet contains handouts, worksheets, and printed resources.

Families will also be provided with links to many free online resources including: free internet; free meeting sites; how to set up emails, etc.

At the start of the school year, Stepping Stones provides a technology survey which allows the school to consider individual family needs and allows time to coordinate with the sending districts regarding how to address the needs. We ensure that each family can access and work on the educational and therapeutic programs for their child, coordinating with their home district as needed, and sending resources for free internet, email information, etc.

Component 2- Addressing Special Education Needs:

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is provided to the greatest extent possible via electronic, phone, video, and other virtual learning platforms. The teachers and therapists create individualized daily agendas for each student and email/text them to the families each morning before 9am. Any online resources, links, or programs are provided in the morning emails so that the families have quick access to their child's remote educational and therapeutic instruction.

The remote learning day is the same as our regular in-person school day, 8:50am – 2:40pm.

The individualized educational agendas include a series of activities, lessons, and classroom learning events. Families are able to work on all of these with one of our staff via Zoom session or another virtual platform, or on their own using the agendas and staff assistance for guidance. The individualized therapy agendas include activities for the therapy session. Families are able to have virtual therapy sessions via Zoom, or another virtual platform, or are able to work on therapy activities on their own, using the agendas and staff assistance for guidance.

All staff including teachers, teaching assistants, 1:1 teaching assistants, therapists, and all other school personnel will be available to families every school day from 8:50 am – 2:40 pm as per the usual school day.

Therapists use a tracking form to document therapies scheduled, provided, canceled, etc. For each therapy, the families/therapists complete a therapy session assessment overview which provides details about what happened during the session, goals being worked on, goals mastered, and any issues or modifications that were made. Teachers also use tracking notes to identify what educational goals are being worked on, mastered, and any other progress during the remote learning process.

Stepping Stones administration emails weekly educational and therapeutic assessment overviews to each sending district. The assessments cover the weekly agendas (educational and therapeutic), goals worked on, goal mastery, and documentation of IEP service delivery.

Case managers are responsible for following up with families as per their district requirements.

All sending districts will receive a copy of any updated Remote Learning Plan via email. We will send updates as needed to sending districts regarding student status, remote learning plan updates, re-opening, scheduling IEPs, and rescheduling any meetings.

School administration will maintain contact with case managers regarding any scheduling needs and updates.

Individualized Education Plans (IEP):

For students whose Annual IEP, eligibility review meeting, re-evaluation planning meeting, or any IEP reviews are due during the period of remote at-home learning, school administration will contact sending districts to schedule or re-schedule the meeting, and/or schedule a time for any IEP related meeting via conference call if feasible. The sending district is responsible for notifying the family of the any IEP related meeting. A copy of updated progress reports, annual review information, and any other educational or therapeutic information needed for the meeting is sent via email to the sending district and family in advance of the scheduled meeting. In addition, quarterly progress reports will be emailed to sending districts and families according to prescribed code requirements.

In coordination with sending district, Stepping Stones will confirm method of virtual IEP meeting (i.e. Zoom video call, Google Meets call, conference call, etc.). The case manager is responsible for providing the family with the invitation for the IEP meeting and to ensure that the family is able to join via the virtual platform being used. Re-evaluation planning meetings occur using this same procedure. The sending districts are responsible for any re-evaluations that are required during this period of remote learning.

Component 3- Addressing ELL and Bilingual Needs:

There are no ELL students or students who need bilingual education.

Our bilingual staff is available via phone, text, or email for families that may need any or all of the information translated into their native language.

For families that need assistance in their native language in order to work with our staff to provide remote educational and therapy services, our bilingual staff is available. Daily agendas are reviewed in their native language each morning; a bilingual staff joins any video, phone, or other virtual session as needed; and bilingual staff are assigned to each family that needs assistance in their native language for any issue related to IEP work, remote learning needs, contact with staff, and any other school related need. Our social worker also coordinates with our bilingual staff in order to provide outreach, resources, and community assistance.

Component 4- Attendance Plan:

Families will be responsible for texting in at 9am to their teacher, in response to an email sent by their teacher which includes the daily learning agenda, that their child is available for learning and therapies that day. Teachers will track attendance through this morning check-in.

For students who are present, families are responsible for completing daily assessment overviews and sending back to the teachers and therapists at the end of each school day.

When the teacher has not heard from a family regarding a child's attendance, a teaching assistant, teacher, or school nurse is responsible for reaching out to the family to confirm whether the student is absent for the day.

For any absence of five or more consecutive days, a letter will be sent to the district of residence as mandated under N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.9 (a) 3 and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32 regarding habitual tardiness or prolonged absences.

Monthly attendance will be sent to each sending district along with the monthly billing. In addition, attendance records for each child are kept in the New Jersey Department of Education registers maintained by the classroom teachers.

Component 5- Safe Delivery of Meals:

There is no school food service, meal delivery, or school nutrition benefits at our program.

Component 6- Facilities Plan:

The building is being cleaned by the cleaning company throughout the period of school closure.

Component 7 – Other Considerations:

As per DOE checklist:

- The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School does not have accelerated learning or other extended student learning opportunities.
- The School Social Worker will maintain frequent contact via phone, video call, or text to families and staff to address any social and emotional health needs. If needed, virtual support groups can be created and implemented on an as-needed or ongoing basis.
- There are no Title 1 learning programs.
- The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School does not have 21st Century Programs.
- There are no credits for school, high school students, or situations where there may be credit loss.
- The sending district is responsible for any student transportation needs.
- There are no Extra-curricular programs
- There is no childcare.
- There is no formalized community programming.

Component 8 – Sharing Plans:

The Arc of Essex County's Stepping Stones School Health Related Closure Plan will be shared with all sending districts.

Component 9- Essential Employees:

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Social Worker
- School Nurse
- Administrative Assistant
- Special Education Teacher
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Speech Therapist
- Teaching Assistant
- 1:1 Teaching Assistant
- Custodian

Component 10- Board Approval:

The plan was board approved on September 19, 2023

Component 11- Posted on Website:

The plan was posted on the school website on October 26, 2023