Agency Name: The New Interdisciplinary School

BEDS Code:

Administrative Address: 430 Sills Road, Yaphank, NY, 11980

1. Program Site Address: 430 Sills Road, Yaphank, NY, 11980

Program(s) provided at this site:

4410 (Pre-school Special Education
Multi-Disciplinary Evaluations
Other: Childcare/ Pre-K

2. Program Site Address: Eagle Elementary School 1000 Wave avenue, Medford, NY

Program(s) provided at this site:

4410 ( Preschool Special education/ Integrated class
UPK

Contact Person (Name, Title): Kristen Moran-Daleo, Associate Executive Director

Contact Phone Number: 631924-5583

Contact Email Address: kristenm@niskids.org

Website where this plan and any plan updates will be posted: www.niskids.org

INTRODUCTION
This plan was developed to conform to the guidance provided by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in their July, 2020, document entitled: Recovering, Rebuilding, and Renewing: The Spirit of New York’s Schools – Reopening Guidance. This plan will be revised and updated as needed to adjust to changing public health conditions caused by the COVID-19 virus and all of the new requirements and regulations which may emerge over time. We solicited input and involvement from the families we serve and our staff during the original drafting of our re-opening plan. We will rely on continued input from all stakeholders as we move forward implementing this plan and as we contemplate any additions or modifications.
We know our program must be as flexible and as responsive as possible to the needs of our students, families, staff members. We will closely monitor the conditions of our community as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the effectiveness and appropriateness of our plan. Be assured that nothing has changed our sincere commitment to our students and our determination to provide the highest possible quality of educational programming and related services even during these difficult times.

The goal of the plan is to guide the delivery of high-quality educational services as safely as possible whether that service delivery is in-person, through a remote learning platform or a blended combination of remote and in-person services. Our focus and concerns extend to the social and emotional needs of our students, families and staff members. By diligently working together and remaining focused on the outcomes we desire, we can find solutions to the many challenges ahead.

Our plan includes all the required elements identified by NYSED and follows the structure of the guidance by addressing the following areas as they apply to our students with disabilities and their families:

1. Communication/Family and Community Engagement
2. Health and Safety
3. Facilities
4. Nutrition
5. Transportation
6. Social Emotional Well-Being
7. School Schedules
8. Budget and Fiscal
9. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism
10. Technology and Connectivity
11. Teaching and Learning
12. Special Education
13. Staffing

Any suggestions, concerns and/or questions about our plan should be directed to the contact person identified at the beginning of this document0 (Pre-school Special Education)

**1. Communication**

- Administration, Educational Supervisors, results of Parent surveys and other agency members were involved in creating this plan. DOH, CDC, and SED guidance was used to formulate the plan and will be used for any future revisions.
- NIS is committed to ongoing and regular communication through a variety of methods, including paper mail, email, classroom communication app, website, and social media.
- NIS will primarily communicate to Families/parents/Legal Guardians through email, classroom communication app and social media.
• Staff communication will primarily be done through email, zoom meetings and postings within the building. Texting short messages and automatic calls are also available.
• The visitor policy will be posted on our website and signs will be placed on the front door.
• All teachers will develop lessons for children based on their learning style and level of understanding in appropriate COVID 19 safety protocols. These protocols will include hand hygiene. Proper face covering, respiratory hygiene and social distancing.
• Posters and signs will be posted throughout the building encouraging students, staff and visitors to adhere to CDC and DOH regarding the proper use of face coverings. Requirement of staff to wear face mask will also be communicated through virtual communication and written training.

2. Health and Safety

Health Checks

Staff will receive the written protocol for observing sign of illness, including the symptoms of COVID-19. The protocol requires the person suspected of being ill must be taken to the nurse immediately.

Staff and visitors will complete a health screening attestation (OCFS form) which includes the questions:

1. Is your temperature higher than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit?
2. Have you had any known contact with a person confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
3. Are you currently experiencing ANY of the following symptoms?
   o Cough (new or worsening)
   o Shortness of breath (new or worsening)
   o Trouble breathing (new or worsening)
   o Fever
   o Chills
   o Muscle pain (new or worsening)
   o Headache (new or worsening)
   o Sore throat (new or worsening)
   o New loss of taste
   o New loss of smell
4. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 through a diagnostic test in the past 14 days?
5. You have not travelled outside NYS as per travel advisory in the last 14 days?

If you have answered “NO” to all questions, you have passed and may enter the program.
If you have answered “YES” to any question, you will not be allowed to enter the program.

• This form will be signed off prior to entering the building. NIS will maintain a copy of all health screening attestations. Temperatures will be taken onsite; staff will then sign -in to verify their covid daily health screening is complete and accurate.
• Parents will be required to sign the health check attestation for their child prior to their child entering the building. THE children's temperatures will be taken upon entering the site. Periodic notices will be sent home to stress the importance of notifying NIS of any changes on their child's health screening form.
• Any child or staff that is showing symptoms of illness is required to be seen by the nurse immediately. If the nurse is unavailable, an administrator will be called immediately. The nurse will assess the individuals to determine if the symptoms are more appropriate describes as a chronic condition therefore not contagious.

• Any child, or staff that has a temperature at or greater than 100.0, shows symptoms of COVID, provides a positive response to any of the health check questions or has visited a state on the travel ban will be sent home immediately. If the child must wait for an authorized adult, they will be supervised in a designated sick room staffed by the nurse or other appropriate staff member.

• Visitors will not be allowed into NIS unless an administrator deems them essential. Any visitor entering the building must have their temperature taken and they must sign a health screening form.

• Parents will be given information that describes signs of COVID –19 and Children Inflammatory Syndrome. Parents will be given periodic email reminders with CDC approved symptoms and sign of illness.

Training/Education
Hand Hygiene
• NIS will train staff via video and written protocol in the importance and correct technique for hand and respiratory hygiene. Signs are put up throughout the school hallways, common areas, in every bathroom and classroom. Written and visual steps in proper hand washing are exhibited by every sink in the building.

Social Distancing
• To maintain social distancing staggered arrival and dismissal times for staff and children will be implemented. Classes will remain in their classroom most of the day. Limited movement within the building will also allow social distance between classes. Playground schedule will be modified, only 1 class at a time on each playground with a 10 break between classes. When staff is not able to socially distant for other adults as well as when they are with children masks are required. Signs and markers will be used to provide visuals reminding the need for social distancing.

• If students are unable to come to school due to being high risk, they will be given their educational services via distance learning. If a staff member is high risk or living with a person at high risk and their position allows them to work from home, NIS will accommodate them. If their position is not able to be accommodate HR will instruct them on all possible options.

Face Coverings
• All staff and visitors are required to wear a mask whenever they are with children, or when they cannot socially distance from adults. Students are encouraged to wear a mask upon entering the building, exiting the building
• Students will not be made to wear masks during class, due to the nature of early childhood education activities. If a child is able to wear a mask with it presenting a challenge, distraction, or obstruction to their educational and therapeutic service.
• Each staff member will be given a supply of masks to wear on the first day of school. Inventory of the supplies will be completed regularly, a backup of PPE are being maintained by the agency.

Confirmed Case of COVID-19

• If a confirmed case of COVID-19 NIS will contact the DOH, all appropriate information regarding tracing will be offered. The classroom or office the infected person has been working will be closed off immediately. The room will be cleaned as per CDC and DOH guidelines. The class will be placed on distance learning until it is deemed safe to return based upon the current guidelines and recommendations.
• If a student or staff have a confirmed case of COVID-19 they must stay home until it has been at least 10 days since the first symptoms. NIS will contact the local DOH upon the confirmation of positive test.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

• Cleaning and disinfecting the building will be completed in compliance with DOH and CDC requirements:
  ▪ Any space used by different groups of children will be cleaned and disinfected between the group.
    ▪ This may include the playground, classrooms and therapy rooms.
  ▪ High touch areas will be disinfected throughout the school day.
  ▪ The entire building will be cleaned and disinfected every evening.
    • A cleaning and disinfecting log will be maintained daily.
    • Cleaning and Disinfecting will be a priority during this health crisis.
    • Soap and water will be used to clean within the classroom during the school day.

Emergency Procedures
School safety drills will be conducted in shifts, approximately half of the school will exit at one time through different doors to allow for social distancing.
Lockdowns will be completed as normal, with the exception of staff and children in the hallway entering the closest classroom. Staff will be instructed to return back to their therapy space or the child's classroom, whichever is closer.

NIS COVID safety Coordinator and resource person will be:
Kristen Moran-Daleo
Associate Executive Director
No visitors will be permitted unless deemed essential.
NIS will provide parents/families information regarding screening their child at home. Periodic reminders will be sent via paper mail, email and school communication app.
At each screening location, appropriate PPEs will be available. Staff and all adults will be required to wear a mask, in addition plastic gown coverings, gloves, and face shields will also be available. Adults will be asked to remain 6 feet apart whenever possible.
Face masks will be required for staff anytime they are working with children. Children will not be required to wear a mask during classroom activities given the nature of early childhood education.
The nurse’s office will be used for other nursing activities, including given out medications, etc. An isolation room will be used for anyone waiting to go home due to COVID 19 symptoms. Within the isolation room, each individual will be kept 6 feet apart and the nurse or staff will wear appropriate PPEs.
Maintenance is provided appropriate PPEs.
A checklist will be used to monitor any potential needs in PPE. Each classroom, department will complete the check list daily. If any supplies are needed, they must inform an administrator.

3. Facilities

Some common areas will not be used during this current health crisis. Gym, library and our open space will not be used for groups of children. Specials will be pushed into the classes or will be delivered virtually into the classroom.
Any shared office space will be reconfigured to allow for 6 feet distance between staff or approved separations will be installed. Any changes or additions will be within legal compliance with fire, building, and childcare regulations.
Large treatment rooms have been divided using plastic and vinyl separations to provide individual treatment area for each therapist. This primarily effects our Occupational therapy and Physical therapy rooms.
NIS will use multiple entrances and exits to reduce congestion and promote social distancing. Staggering of schedule will also accomplish this.
Hand washing is vital component of remaining safe, each classroom has access to a sink in the classroom, with soap dispensers to allow for frequent hand washing.
Hand Sanitizers have been installed at every entrance to the building, within each hallway, and in each department. Hand sanitizers are installed appropriately and will be maintain and monitored by our maintenance department.
Our air conditioning unit was installed with the approved and most appropriate filter as recommended during COVD crisis. Window in each classroom can be opened when it is deemed safe and appropriate for the children.
We have the Merv 13 filters and the ability to manage the flow of air according to recommendations and or guidelines.
• All of the air handlers at NIS have been updated within the last 2 years and exceed recommendations for safety standards

4. **NUTRITION**

• Lunches and snacks should be supplied by the parent. NIS will maintain single serve lunches in the event a child required it. Students will eat lunch in their rooms. There will be no community snack, this includes birthday party food, and food related activities.
• Hand washing will be conducted before eating and after.
• NIS still remains committed to inform parents about nutrition and eating. A series of trainings will be offered to parents in a variety of formats written, and video.
• Classes at Eagle Elementary will be provided a snack by Patchogue Medford School District.

5. **TRANSPORTATION**

• Transportation is supplied to NIS children through Suffolk County based on the child’s IEP. To promote social distancing NIS will implement new disembarking and embarking procedures.

**Arrival:**
• Limited number of staff will take children off the bus.
• Only 2 children will be taken at a time, to avoid children holding each other’s hands.
• Staff will use hand sanitizers between these groups of children.
• Children being dropped off by parents will line up along the front of the building, socially distancing from each other. Children’s temperatures will be taken and then permitted into the building.
• Upon arriving to the classroom both staff and children will wash their hands with soap and water.

**Departure:**
• Classes will be called out to busses in groups to allow for less congestion getting onto the bus.
• Parents will pick up their child outside the main doors, students will be called up as their parents arrive.
• Separate door will be used for children being picked up and those going on the bus. Appropriate signage will be up to assist parents and staff in maintaining distance from each other.
• Arrival and Dismissal times will be staggered to further promote social distancing. It will also allow for a reduced arrival times due to the need for individual screenings needing to be completed for each child.
• 6:1:2, 8:1:2 and integrated classes class time will be 8:30-1:00.
12:1:1 class time will be 9:30-2pm
Eagle Elementary times will remain the same.

6. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- NIS places significant importance on a child’s social emotional well-being. We will continue to provide our school wide Incredible Years program which emphasizes coping skills, and social skills.
- Our department of Psychologist and Social workers will be available to assess any concerns raised regarding children. NIS has a standard protocol of referral for in-house and outside counseling. Any parent or staff can refer a child for assessments.
- A training will be completed prior to the first day of school to staff regarding trauma-based education.
- NIS consistently promotes a positive school culture, with proactive initiatives for social emotional wellness.
- Communication between staff and families to anticipate future needs will take place throughout the school year.
- Communication will be provided to staff and families the importance of positive mental health programs and activities.

7. SCHOOL SCHEDULES

- Arrival and Departure will be staggered to reduce student congestion and promote social distance. The tentative schedule NIS is considering is:
  - 6:1:2, 8:1:2, Integrated (full day) - 8:30-1pm
  - 12:1:1 (full day) - 9:30-2pm
  - Integrated (half day) 9-11:30 & 12:30-3pm
- Staffing schedule will also be modified to a staggered arrival and dismissal. Multiple entrances and exits will be used to reduce congestion and promote social distancing.
- Office and supervisor positions that are able to work remotely will be rotated to reduce congestion in the office.
- Classes will do minimal moving around the building however when necessary such as going onto the playground, times will be staggered with a break to prevent cross over.
- NIS will communicate any change in schedule to parents in their appropriate language through email, communication app or phone call if necessary.
• All decision made regarding scheduling and instruction will prioritize equity and access for all students regardless of their primary language, or disabilities.

8. Budget and Fiscal

• NIS has needed to adjust and expand internal budgeting due to COVID-19. We have expensed items specific to COVID-19 in order to track expenses outside our typical operational expenses. Our current budgetary reports and projected revenue and expenses have taken into account COVID-19 related expenses; we have also projected these expenses for the 2020 – 2021 school year based upon the expectation that the additional expense for PPE, cleaning, and other COVID-19 necessities will continue for at least the first two quarters of the 2020 – 2021 school year. All COVID-19 related expenses will continue to be tracked on a separate line.
• We have applied for local private grants and available public grants for which we are eligible.
• We continue to engage in fundraising activities to pay for items such as COVID-19 expenses that fall outside our reimbursement rate. We have also applied for local grants. On the expense side we have kept some staff furloughed and are considering eliminating positions deemed “non-essential.” We have reduced some central office support staff to reduce overhead. This has been accomplished through furloughs, not filling vacancies, and potential elimination of support positions our budget cannot sustain. We are also taking advantage of any payroll tax credits we are eligible for.
• We have ensured a strong virtual program throughout the pandemic when our school was closed. We opened up our school in July when we determined we could do so safely. We continue a strong presence through our webpage and social media to advise current and potential enrollees of our program offerings. We maintain close contact with all families and local school districts to ensure effective communication, excellence in service provision, and visibility for our program within the extended community. We have retained most if not all of our staff through administration and human resource outreach to maintain the ability to optimally serve current and prospective students.

9. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

• Regardless of the instructional setting (in person or remote) staff will be required to maintain log notes of all sessions. Any staff member remotely teaching will be required to sign in daily with appropriate supervisor and maintain logs of their instructional time.
• NIS, historically is a school that connects with the parents, the students and the staff. This will continue either in person or remotely. We believe that working as a team benefits the child overall development and progress. Continues training promoting these values will be conducted and creative ways to connect differently will be developed.
• If a child is not participating in remote learning, a protocol to assess the situation will be enacted. It will include supervisors attempting to contact family, both in letter and phone calls and communicating with the CPSE of the child home district.
• Mandated reporting training is completed each year. Staff will be periodical reminded of their responsibility as mandated reporters. Safety of all our children will be a priority.

10. Technology and Connectivity

• NIS has created a sign up for all parents to receive email updates using Constant contact. The sign up will be assessed to determine if all families have completed the appropriate steps.
• Teachers will request information from parents regarding access to devices and internet to be able to receive virtual services.
• If a family has difficulty access a device, the team will develop an alternate plan for remote learning, include Paper packets, and regular phone calls.
• NIS has purchased the licensed Zoom platform to ensure privacy and security.
• NIS is committed to providing equitable education for all students, regardless of the implementation model.
• Continued evaluation will be completed to ensure the effectiveness of NIS plan.

11. Teaching and Learning

• If at anytime local or state conditions change warranting a move form in person to remote NIS has developed a continuity of learning.
• All families will already be signed up for our email communications. Continuity of learning will include a mixture of prerecorded lessons and special, live group and individual sessions. A school wide newsletter will also be completed week lot provide additional resources and recording to enrich the child’s education. All live sessions both group, and individual will be provided by the child teacher and therapists.
• A parent or caregiver is required to participate in all live session with the child due to the young age of the students.
• Teachers will work with a translator as necessary to provide appropriate communication. The teacher communication app will also be used to translate documents.
• NIS take a positive approach to helping children and families adjust to attending school. Developing trust and building from positive interactions allows for an easier transition. Support will be provided for any family, child or staff that needs it to help ease the transition.
• Teachers/Therapist will continue to provide communication with families regarding their child’s progress. A written progress report will be completed in November and sent home to the parents.
• Assessment of children will be completed through ongoing informal and formal assessments. In case of remote learning the parent would be assisting the teacher to collect data in progress towards goals.
• Due to the current health crisis family style meals will not be permitted. Children will bring their own snack and lunch. Lessons will be creative is ways ot promote the skills from family style in alternate ways.
• All classrooms have access to a sink with soap and water to wash hands often throughout the day.
• Center time will be redesigned. Less students at each center, more centers open to allow for separation and more structure rotation.
• Each child will be given their individual supplies such as crayons, glue, markers, and other sensory material. These supplies will be kept in closed individual containers.
• Washing hands will be completed often during the day. At minimum:
  Upon arrival
  Before and after eating,
  Before playing with toys, including sensory material
  Before and after going to the playground, or therapy.
  After using the bathroom.
• Soap and water will be used to clean tables and soiled areas.
• Children will not hold each other's hand to reduce contact.
• As early childhood providers it is important to find a balance in distance learning in reference to screen time. We recognize limited screen time for children and the need for authentic learning experiences. We will coach and instruct parents in the importance of this, providing them with schedules, other resources, and activities.
• As much as NIS appreciates volunteers and our community visitors at this time they will not be permitted to enter the building. Alternate ways of volunteering and participating will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
• Children will remain with their classmates for the duration of the day. Limited movement will be permitted. If a child is going to be using a space previous occupied by another class the space will be cleaned and disinfected prior.
• Parents will be given a choice between in person and remote learning based on the family's needs and concerns.
• All models will strive for as much inclusivity and culturally responsiveness as possible while maintaining all safety protocols.

Learning models.

In person
• -All students attend school
• -Modified and staggered hours to reduce congestion at arrival and dismissal will be implemented.
• -There will be no more than 15 children in a classroom.
• -IEP mandates will be provided as closely as possible.

Remote Learning
All students will be provided small group and individual instruction over Zoom with their teacher throughout the week.
Prerecorded lessons and special will be available for the families.
Schedules and supplemental activities will be provided.
Related services will be provided in a combination of individual virtual sessions, exercises, activities delivered via email, prerecorded videos and phone calls.
Hybrid Learning

With- in our in-person model students will be able to choose the mode of instruction, either remote or in person. If a change of circumstance happens, we will be able to provide the child with remote immediately.

12. Special Education

- Regardless of the service delivery, all student that fall under the FAPE requirements will continue to receive services.
- NIS will develop meaningful engagement with all parents regardless of their primary language.
- We will work closely with every student CPSE through attending meeting, providing reports and maintaining regular contact.
- If a child has assertive technology or aids to meet their unique needs NIS will work with the families and the CPSE to make sure student have what they need.
- Documentation of participation will be completed for every child. Documentation will also contain all videos, supplemental materials, emails and phone calls and other activities.
- Data will be collected on the child’s progress toward IEP goals. Results will be shared with CPSE to make plans for possible extended school closures.
- NIS plans to be in person 5 days a week due to our small class sizes and the significant needs of our students.
- Related services in person will be delivered as close as possible to the IEP mandates, understanding that NYS guideline gives flexibility due to the COVID crisis. One therapist in each discipline will be used in each classroom as much as possible. This will allow for less cross cohort contamination. area will be disinfected between students from other classrooms.
- Related services in the remote learning plan will be delivered in a variety of delivery models will be used for each child which will include a combination of virtual live sessions, prerecorded sessions, emails and phone calls.
- Individual students need will be considered as method is determined.

13. Staffing

- NIS intends to staff all positions wil licensed qualified professions.
- Due to the possible needs of substitutes this school year our school will undertake robust recruitment efforts to identify and process qualified substitutes. In the 2020/2021 school year, as permitted by NYSED, if qualified substitute teachers cannot be engaged,
individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent, even those not working toward
certification can first be engaged for up to ninety (90) days and then beyond the first ninety
(90) day period through the end of June, 2021, as long as the superintendent documents
and attests that recruitment efforts did not identify a fully qualified substitute teacher. The
superintendent must attest to the shortage of qualified recruits initially and then at the end
of the first ninety (90) day period. Recruitment efforts will be extensively documented.

- Staff members that request accommodations will discuss their options with Human
  Resources. There may be some limited opportunities dependent on the position to provide
  remote services.

14. Staff Evaluations

    All staff will continue to receive a final year evaluation based on the appropriate criteria for
    their position.