**Reopening The Lorge School – Distance Learning Model**

After careful consideration, the Lorge School will **NOT** open its doors on September 8, 2020 for in-person instruction. All academic and therapeutic services will continue to be delivered remotely to insure the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty. The factors which led to these decisions are as follows: **(1)** The school’s parent survey has indicated that only 33.9% of parents are willing to send their children back to school. **(2)** A staff/faculty survey has indicated that 50% of employees have concerns about physically returning to work due to transportation; pre-existing medical conditions (family or personal), childcare or other circumstances. **(3)** The challenge of practicing social distancing due to the physical size of our building, classrooms, and office suites coupled with the emotional needs of our student population matched with the hands-on nature of our instructional, behavioral and therapeutic model. **(4)** The uncertainty surrounding busing; close to 90% of Lorge students are transported to and from school on a daily basis. The amount of kids on a bus and the size of our buses make it difficult to practice social distancing.

We will continue to closely monitor and evaluate the status of the COVID Virus and keep you informed about our intentions to reopen. We are committed to addressing all required physical modifications to our instructional and therapeutic spaces, as well as purchase the required PPE’s, face coverings, social distancing signage, cleaning supplies, hiring new medical and custodial staff, temperature scanning, testing, contact tracing and developing sick person protocols as laid out in State’s reopening plan.

**Distance Learning Model – Academic Services**

The Lorge School plans to continue our remote instructional program utilizing the Google classroom platform. Students will be required to login to their assigned classroom, check the daily assignments and submit a work product to be assessed by the teacher. All students will be required to attend live lessons and view pre recorded lessons in order to complete assignments successfully. Teachers will also use internet based - supplemental programs like Prodigy (Math), MaxScholar (ELA) and Google’s Read and Write application to augment our instructional engagement and provide tools that can help students write and process information more effectively. In addition to the aforementioned technical programs, support staff will make daily contact with students and families to offer individualized support, identify any new concerns, and help broker resources to the students or families in need by coordinating with clinical and academic faculty. Please note, we have not received notification as to the New York State Education Department’s (NYSED) intent to reimburse schools for 1:1 Student Aides. We intend to rehire all 1:1 Student Aides when the NYSED decides to reinstate funding for the position in our monthly reimbursement structure.

Both summative and formal assessments will continue to be used to monitor or reshape IEP goals, provide progress reports and grades, and to inform teacher pacing while monitoring student understanding. The intent is for each student to develop a digital portfolio and engage in academic activities which include but are not limited to writing, project based learning, virtual presentations, and the use of the five habits of mind (Conjecture, Perspective, Relevance, Connections & Evidence) to demonstrate mastery. Faculty members across disciplines will continue to collaborate with the intent of providing students with comprehensive considerations around helping them achieve their goals.

In regards to curriculum, The Lorge School will continue to use the hybrid version of Think Central Journeys for ELA, Go!Math for Mathematics, Thinking like a Historian and WeTeachNYC for Social Studies and Science respectively. Hybrid curriculums provide students and teachers with access to resources from the comfort and safety of their own homes. All Lorge students have been provided with a school issued laptop and we will continue to assess their technical needs regularly. In the event a student has damaged or broken the school issued laptop, the support staff will assist the student by coordinating with the NYC Department of Education to secure a tablet or other suitable device.

**Distance Learning Model – Clinical Services – SY 20-21**

All related services would continue to be offered through approved tele-therapy platforms. Counseling, Speech, and Occupational services are all delivered using Google meets. All sessions are facilitated in individual and group settings as outlined by the student’s IEP. Before any related services are delivered, parents are required to provide consent and approve the use of such platforms.

Clinical faculty is expected to contact families and coordinate any outside services a young person may require. Members of the team will continue to cultivate existing relationships with external agencies and insure our students are supported during these difficult times. All session notes are recorded into EasyTrac and all attendance is captured in our student information system.

Academic and clinical faculty will continue to virtually case-conference around student concerns and partner on developing a plan to address the underlying issues.

**Stakeholder Communication**

The Lorge School’s decision to open the school year remotely is based on information collected from parents/guardians, school staff/faculty, and our Board of Directors. We will continue to communicate future decisions in tandem with the aforementioned groups and ensure we provide information to parents in their native language. We will continue to use email, phone calls, and letters to communicate with stakeholders as we move towards a physical reopening. Additionally, The Lorge School is committed to implementing all recommended guidance from lead agencies like the Department of Health, Center for Disease Control, New York State Education Department, and the New York City Department of Education.

**Distance Learning Summary – SY20-21**

Although it is our preference to resume in-person activities, the decision to remain remote is solely based on the health and safety of our community members, both in school and at home. The special education needs of our students’ presents unique challenges not often experienced by most general education settings. As we get further into the school year and have a better understanding on how the virus impacts school communities, we would be better positioned to make informed decisions moving forward. We recognize that State and City officials are working diligently to get children back into school yet there are too many uncertainties (transportation, funding, medical, and use of space) which put at risk the health and safety of our most important assets, our students and those who serve them.