

# **SOUTH BUFFALO CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **COVID-19 Reopening Plan 2020-2021**



**July 29, 2020**

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South Buffalo Charter School's COVID-19 school reopening plan establishes and explains the necessary policies, practices and conditions necessary to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidelines for COVID-19, the State's "New York Forward" guidelines, along with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to employee safeguards and potential exposure to COVID-19. As the health and safety of SBCS staff and students is our top priority, the plan has a strong commitment to those measures.

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is our highest priority. This reopening plan was created to provide precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. The plan is divided into categories. Each category contains guidance, procedures, protocols, and/or other measures that explain practices that need to be considered to maximize the health and safety of students and staff.

SBCS's designated COVID-19 Safety Coordinator is the Principal; however, the health and safety of our students and staff is everyone's responsibility. Any questions or concerns should follow the SBCS's normal chain of command. Students and/or parents should first contact the teacher(s), counselor, assistant principal, or behavior specialist, whereas, employees should direct their concerns to the immediate supervisor. The building principal and assistant principals are the designated building-base coordinators for reports of positive cases as well as other building level student and staff issues.

A short description of the plan categories is provided below:

**Communications/Family and Community Engagement:**

Describes the channels SBCS will utilize to communicate with parents, students, faculty & staff regarding information on COVID-19 and related topics.

**Health & Safety Protocols**

Describes safeguards for public health and safety including healthy hygiene practices, use of masks, symptom monitoring & screening, plans for when a stakeholder becomes sick, readmission, and protocols for social distancing.

**Facilities: Operations**

Explains health and safety protocols for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing workplace risk assessment, cleaning and disinfecting, and ventilation and HVAC. Provides procedures for buildings & grounds, transportation and food service.

**Facilities: Building Procedures**

Explains building access, classroom layout, cafeteria, personal property rules, playgrounds, hall traffic, arrival and dismissal, and extracurricular procedures.

**Child Nutrition**

Explains how students in all learning models will have access to healthy meals.

**Transportation**

SBCS does not own buses, nor employ the drivers. BPS and Lackawanna students are transported by First Student. All other students are transported by their district of residence. All bus facilities are to follow the DOH guidelines for disinfecting, cleaning and mask wearing.

**Social Emotional Well-Being**

Describes the steps taken to create emotionally and physically safe, supportive and engaging learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.

**School Schedules**

Explains the restructure of programs to include flexible scheduling models - providing in-person, remote or hybrid learning models - and to provide synchronous or asynchronous instruction.

**Attendance & Chronic Absenteeism**

Describes policies and procedures for the academic consequences on lost instructional time.

**Technology & Connectivity**

Discusses the shift to remote learning and the effectiveness of digital tools, platforms, and resources utilized.

**Teaching & Learning**

Describes instructional models, prioritizing standards, academic gaps and interventions, and considerations for supporting diverse learners. Based on guidance from the NYSED, the DOH, and the Governor, the SBCS will determine the instructional model for the 2020-2021 school year. All core and special area courses will follow the specifications of the determined model. NOTE - a separate document with academic specifications is being developed.

**Special Education**

Describes the provision of special education programs and services that ensures a free, appropriate public education. This section discusses access to programs, services, accommodations, and technology needed in various instructional models as well as how staff will communicate progress to parents.

**Bilingual Education and English Language Learners**

Describes how SBCS will insure that ELL students will be provided the opportunity for full-participation whether it be through an in-person, remote, or hybrid model of instruction.

**Teacher and Administrative Evaluation System**

Describes how SBCS will provide feedback and support to teachers through the evaluation process, and support them as we transition to remote learning.

**Certification, Incidental Teaching, and Substitute Teaching**

Explains how SBCS will utilize substitute teachers as an important resource in the COVID-19 crisis.

**Athletics:**

Explains general considerations for health and safety precautions.

## **Communications / Family and Community Engagement**

### **General Information**

South Buffalo Charter School Reopening Plan was developed to maintain a certain level of flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing landscape surrounding K-12 education. SBCS has offered and will continue to offer multiple modes of stakeholder engagement. These include the following:

- Parent surveys
- Teacher surveys
- Administrator work groups
- Teacher/Administrator work groups
- Health professional/Administrator work groups
- Staff/Administrator work groups

South Buffalo Charter School will utilize social media (SBCS Facebook and Twitter accounts), the SBCS website ([www.southbuffalocs.org](http://www.southbuffalocs.org)), and our One Call system as the primary communication methods to inform parents, students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and the community of procedures, protocols, and updates regarding student instruction. The information communicated will be in accordance with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and NYS Guidelines. This information will include adherence to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), specifically acceptable face coverings, when social distance cannot be maintained.

South Buffalo Charter School's most utilized mode of notification is our mass communication system, One Call. South Buffalo Charter School will use the system to send emails, text messages, phone calls, and voicemail alerts in mass, usually pointing to an explanatory document or a letter on the school website. The school website ([www.southbuffalocs.org](http://www.southbuffalocs.org)) is the primary repository for letters, documents, event headlines, and general information about SBCS.

### **Training & Signage**

South Buffalo Charter School has procured signage and identified highly visible areas to display the signage to remind students, faculty, staff and visitors of hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, social distancing, COVID-19 signs and symptoms, and the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Training videos may be created to use for continuous review of the above. These sessions may be completed virtually or in-person by students, faculty, staff, parents and other visitors through the SBCS website or other technological resources.

### **Parent & Student Notification**

South Buffalo Charter School will provide guidance to parents and students including, but not limited to, the following information regarding COVID-19. Dissemination of this information will be dependent upon the mode of instruction (i.e., in-person,



hybrid model, or remote learning model) and will be made available in parents' home language.

- When/how long to stay home from class/other activities if they are sick.
- What they should do if exposure is suspected.
- What will happen if a student tests positive, details about isolation, and when they can return to campus/class/activities.
- What to do if they suspect someone else may be sick.
- How student health will be monitored.
- When and how they will be permitted to return to campus in the fall, including any new procedures, updates to timing, etc.
- What will happen if there is a case or an outbreak on campus.
- How a school closure will be handled, including what the criteria for deciding to close campus will be.
- What additional measures students in vulnerable populations should take and/or what additional options they have.
- What the new social distancing/PPE protocols on campus are and how a failure to follow these protocols will be handled.
- How work spaces/classrooms/common areas will be cleaned/disinfected.

### **Faculty & Staff Notification**

South Buffalo Charter School and individual building will provide guidance to faculty and staff with the following information regarding COVID-19:

- When/how long to stay home from work if they are sick. This will include details on how this will affect sick time allowance.
- What they should do if exposure is suspected and what will happen if an employee tests positive. This will include details about isolation and when they can return to work. This should also include details about procedures if an employee's close contact tests positive.
- How employee health will be monitored.
- What to do if they suspect someone else may be sick.
- When and how they will be permitted to return to work, including any new procedures, updates to timing, etc. This should include details on who is permitted to work from home and under what circumstances.
- What will happen if there is a case or an outbreak at school.
- How a school closure will be handled.
- What additional measures employees in vulnerable populations should take and/or what additional options they have.
- What the new social distancing/PPE protocols on campus are and how a failure to follow these protocols will be handled.
- How work spaces/classrooms/common areas will be cleaned/disinfected.

## **Health and Safety**

As per the NYSED Guidance for re-opening schools, South Buffalo Charter School shall continually monitor safe building capacity, the amount of available PPE, and the local hospital capacity (as determined through consultation with the Erie County Health Department). This will assist SBCS in making determinations about in-person instruction, a hybrid model, or the need for 100% remote instruction.

### **Social Distancing**

Social distancing as defined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), is also referred to as “physical distancing,” meaning keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. To practice social or physical distancing: Stay at least six (6) feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people. Schools will create protocols to ensure social distancing whenever possible unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance.

### **Social Distancing for Certain Activities**

Schools are responsible for ensuring that a distance of twelve (12) feet in all directions is maintained between individuals while participating in activities requires projecting the voice (e.g. singing) playing a wind instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (e.g. participating in a physical education class).

### **Face Coverings**

According to Executive Order 202.17 and guidance from NYSDOH any individual who is over age two (2) and able to medically tolerate a face-covering shall be required to cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance. Furthermore, face coverings are strongly recommended by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) at all times, except for meals and instruction with appropriate social distancing. Acceptable face coverings, as defined by the NYSDOH, include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that snugly fit and cover both the mouth and nose. Schools will create protocols to ensure that face coverings are worn in the building when social distancing is not possible.

Faculty, staff, and students are required to wear acceptable face coverings:

- any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing,
- at the bus stop and while riding the school bus,
- while entering the building,
- in any common spaces (including but not limited to: foyer, library cafeteria, restrooms, hallways, copy rooms, faculty rooms, offices),
- in tightly confined spaces (e.g., offices, therapy rooms and small classrooms) occupied by more than one individual at a time,
- when there is more than one occupant in a SBCS vehicle.

For those students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, and have provided medical documentation from a licensed physician, including students where such covering would impair their physical or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face covering. The bus is an extension of the classroom. As such, students granted this exemption will not be forced to do so or denied transportation.

South Buffalo Charter School will provide periodic training to students, faculty, and staff on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard face coverings.

Employees and students will be provided a face covering, but may bring their own approved covering, however, disposable surgical masks will also be available.

### **Mask Breaks**

Breaks should occur throughout the day when individuals can be six (6) feet apart and ideally outside or at least with the windows open. Classrooms will establish a six (6) foot, mask-free zone in which students may take their mask breaks. If such zones cannot be safely established, other arrangements will be made to accommodate mask breaks.

### **Transparent Face Coverings**

Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues. These will be considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf/hard of hearing, and their teachers. For example, South Buffalo Charter School may provide alternate PPE (i.e., masks that are transparent at or around the mouth) for therapies or interventions that require visualization of the movement of the lips and/or mouths (e.g. speech therapy). These alternate coverings may also be used for certain students (e.g. hearing impaired) that benefit from being able to see more of the teacher's face.

### **Proper Handwashing & Respiratory (i.e., Cough and Sneeze) Hygiene**

Teachers and support staff will reinforce proper hand and respiratory hygiene with all students at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the year. Educational training regarding hand and respiratory hygiene, face covering protocols, social distancing, and other public health measures will be made available to students and staff.

Times should be designated on the schedule for students to wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, at a minimum before/after these events:

- at the start of the day when children enter the classroom before snacks and lunch;
- after using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet;
- after touching, sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses;
- after snacks and lunch, particularly if hands are sticky, greasy or soiled when students come in from outdoor play or recess.

South Buffalo Charter School will provide and maintain adequate supplies to support healthy hand and respiratory hygiene, including soap, hand sanitizer (in accordance with FCNYS 2020 Section 5705.5) with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older students who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and lined trash receptacles.

## **Health Monitoring and Screening**

Active surveillance for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (i.e., COVID-19) will be essential to informing school policy and public understanding over time. South Buffalo Charter School will take all appropriate safety precautions and measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19; however, it will not be possible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools to zero.

## **Symptoms**

Please refer to the CDC guidance “Symptoms of Coronavirus” for the most up to date information on symptoms associated with COVID-19. Please note that the manifestation of the COVID-19 in children, although similar, is not always the same as that for adults. Children may be less likely to present with fever as an initial symptom, and may only have gastrointestinal tract symptoms, which should be taken into consideration during the screening process. Students may not attend school if they have had a temperature greater than 100.0° F.

Refer to CDC guidance on symptoms, which may appear two (2) to fourteen (14) days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Other less common symptoms have been reported and include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea.

Signs will be posted throughout the facilities and school buildings reminding staff and students of the COVID-19 symptoms and to monitor frequently. Staff and students who are symptomatic will be sent to the school nurse or designated personnel.

Temperature Checks: All individuals must take their temperature each day at school, prior to onboarding buses or car, and before entering the school facility. A fever is technically defined as a body temperature of 100.0° F, or higher, according to the NYSDOH, fever temperature is consistent for both children and adults.

If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0° F, they shall stay home. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0° F at a point during the school/work day, the individual will be sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

Daily Health Screening Procedures: On a daily basis, faculty, staff, and students (or parent/guardian on behalf of students) must answer the following questions to self-monitor and complete a health questionnaire prior to boarding their bus or entering any school facility. The questionnaire will determine whether the individual has:

1. knowingly been in close or proximate contact in the past 14 days with anyone who has tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 or who has or had symptoms of COVID-19;
2. tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 14 days;
3. has experienced any symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, in the past 14 days;
4. has traveled internationally or from a state with widespread community transmission of COVID-19 per the New York State Travel Advisory in the past 14 days.

If an individual answers “Yes” to any of the above questions, the individual shall stay in their car or return to their car, and contact his/her health care provider. South Buffalo Charter School will work with each individual employee who sets forth this information to determine use of leave and return to work protocols, in accordance with guidance and directives that have been issued by the federal, state and local public health authorities and governmental agencies.

#### **Positive Screen Protocols: Prior to School Hours**

- Any individual who screens positive for COVID-19 exposure or symptoms, if screened at the school, must be immediately sent home with instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.
  - Students who are being sent home because of a positive screen (e.g., onset of COVID-19 symptoms) must be immediately separated from other students and supervised until their parent/legal guardian or emergency contact can retrieve them from school.
  - The individual will be provided with information on health care and testing resources, if applicable.
  - SBCS must immediately notify the state and local health department about the case if diagnostic test results are positive for COVID-19.
  - SBCS will follow protocols set forth by the CDC and DOH for closure, cleaning, and sanitizing of areas that have been occupied by the individual.

Faculty and staff are required to stay home if they are sick. Parents/guardians are required to observe for signs of illness in their children. Students who exhibit signs of illness (COVID-19 or other) are required to stay home in accordance with guidance from NYSDOH and CDC. Employees shall self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily.

#### Positive Screen Protocols: During School Hours

SBCS will identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms during hours of operation and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision.

The health office will have access to the isolation area for suspected sick students until such time as the student can be transported home or to the hospital. SBCS has an identified space, which is visible to the nurse or other staff member and is at a safe distance from the school community to use as isolation space.

Health officials, staff, and families will be notified of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality consistent with all applicable federal and state privacy laws.

Staff members or children diagnosed with or showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be advised not to return until they have met CDC and/or DOH criteria to discontinue home isolation.

Those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 will be informed to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and to follow CDC or NYSDOH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate CDC or NYSDOH guidance for home isolation. “Close contact” is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the person was isolated.

Any employee or student who screens positive for any of the above criteria (i.e., symptoms, test, or close contact) is prohibited from entering the school. If the employee or student goes to the health office during school hours for any of the above symptoms, and the nurse makes the determination they should be sent home, they will receive instructions to contact their health care provider for assessment and testing.

SBCS will refer to NYSDOH’s “Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure” regarding protocols and policies for individuals seeking to return after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

South Buffalo Charter School will cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as employees or students who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

If necessary, South Buffalo Charter School will have ready a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and temporarily closing as ordered by the NYSDOH, in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.

### **Plan for Returning to School**

If an employee has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, the employee may return to work upon completing at least 10 days of quarantine from the onset of symptoms.

If an employee has had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time AND is not experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, the employee may return to work upon completing 14 days of self-quarantine.

- However, if such an employee is deemed essential and critical for the operation or safety of the workplace, upon a documented determination by SBCS, in consultation with appropriate state and local health authorities, the exposed, asymptomatic employee may return to work so long as the employee adheres to the following practices prior to and during their work shift, which should be monitored and documented by the employer and employee:
  - a. Regular monitoring: The employee must self-monitor for a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit every 12 hours and symptoms consistent with COVID-19 under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
  - b. Wear a mask: The employee must wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.
  - c. Social distance: The employee must continue social distancing practices, including maintaining, at least, six feet of distance from others.
  - d. Clean and disinfect workspaces: The employer must continue to regularly clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.
  - e. Maintain quarantine: The employee must continue to self-quarantine and self-monitor for temperature and symptoms when not at the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

### **Compliance will be monitored and documented by South Buffalo Charter School and employee.**

If an employee is symptomatic upon arrival at work or becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at work, the employee must be separated and sent home immediately and may return to work after completing at least 10 days of isolation from the onset of symptoms **OR** upon receipt of a negative COVID-19 test result.

### **Care Coordination**

The school nurse will coordinate school health services and/or school physician to manage, prevent, and/or reduce health issues. The school nurse will coordinate with counselors, social workers, and school psychologists.

The school nurse will identify students with pre-existing medical or mental health conditions to determine if treatment has been interrupted, medication or supplies have run out.

The school nurse will coordinate with the student's special education teacher to address current health care considerations by:

- Revising Individual Health Plans (IHP)
- Determining the special healthcare needs of medically fragile students
- Communicate with parents and health care providers to determine return to school status and modify IEPs as indicated.

### **Physical Space**

South Buffalo Charter School and/or teacher will examine the current classroom layout to determine the capacity within parameters of proper social distancing to the greatest extent possible and make adjustments as necessary. Alternative spaces in the school (e.g., cafeteria, library, and auditorium) could be repurposed to increase the amount of available space to accommodate the maximum distance possible.

- In these larger spaces, establishing consistent groupings/classes with separation between the cohorts/classes provides another option to maximize these spaces safely.
- Social distancing markers will be posted using tape or signs that denote 6 ft. of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas.

### **Cohorts**

To minimize the number of students who would potentially be exposed in the event of a COVID-19 event, to the extent feasible, the school should aim to keep students in the same group throughout the day. Teachers at the middle school level will maintain consistent cohorts within a class to the extent feasible. When placing students in cohorts, considerations will be given to the following:

- SBCS will divide students into small groups that remain with each other throughout the day. SBCS will look for ways to isolate groups of students and prevent inter-group contact to the extent feasible.
- There are no required maximums on cohort or group sizes, so long as schools adhere to the physical distancing requirements above.
- Gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities are limited to those that can maintain social distancing and support proper hand hygiene.

Each child's personal belongings should be kept separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. If possible, avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids. Place communal materials in special areas.

Classrooms should have adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, music equipment, technology equipment, general classroom supplies) or use of supplies and equipment should be limited by one group of children at a time and cleaned and disinfected between uses.

South Buffalo Charter School will create traffic patterns that best adhere to the social distancing guidelines. Such rerouting must address accessibility issues.



## **Facilities and Operations**

### **Before Opening**

Prior to reopening, SBCS administrators will consult the most recent guidance for school programs, including ongoing mitigation strategies, as well as prevention, support, and communication resources.

- South Buffalo Charter School has purchased and has a plan for continued procurement of PPE. The Maintenance Department will ensure that adequate PPE is on hand on a daily basis for students, faculty, and staff in accordance with pages 33-34 of the SED Guidance. Maintenance and Business Office will ensure that appropriate inventory of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning/disinfection products have been purchased and are provided in accordance with this plan.
- South Buffalo Charter School will post informational signs throughout the building on staying home if feeling sick, how to stop the spread of COVID-19, proper hand washing procedures, social distancing, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, and how to properly wear a face covering.
- South Buffalo Charter School will train all faculty and staff remotely on health and safety protocols and proper hand and respiratory hygiene.
- South Buffalo Charter School has trained custodial and cleaning staff on proper sanitizing protocols and product usage. Training will be ongoing and be reinforced.
- South Buffalo Charter School will train all students on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, proper wearing of face covering, and provide parent/guardian resources to reinforce at home.

### **Daily Cleaning & Disinfection**

A thorough cleaning of all buildings will take place prior to students and staff returning for the school year.

South Buffalo Charter School will follow the hygiene and sanitization requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NYSDOH document “Interim Cleaning and Disinfection Guidance for Primary and Secondary Schools for COVID-19”. Disinfecting products that meet the EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 have been procured and will be used.

Cleaning and disinfection frequency throughout the building will be identified and staff will be assigned responsibility. Custodial staff will maintain a daily cleaning/sanitization log that includes date, time, and scope and keep it on file at each building.

The maintenance and cleaning staff will provide regular building cleaning and disinfecting practices at the end of each school day, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and areas in the school environment (restrooms, offices, break rooms, classrooms, and other spaces throughout the building). Daily cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, railings, copy

machines, light switches, etc. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, if not more frequently.

Custodial and cleaning staff will clean and disinfect routinely throughout the day, focusing on high-risk areas and frequently touched surfaces (e.g. restrooms, cafeteria tables, door handles).

Disinfecting products will be provided for faculty and staff to disinfect commonly used surfaces periodically throughout the day.

### **Cleaning & Disinfection Following a Suspected or Confirmed Case**

The maintenance and cleaning staff will perform cleaning and disinfecting of exposed areas, including all heavy traffic areas and high-touch surfaces. SBCS will follow the CDC guidelines on “Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility” and consult with the ECDOH.

The procedure will include:

- Closing off affected areas used by the individual
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the affected areas
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning/disinfecting (or as long as feasible)
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the individual

Once the affected areas have been cleaned and disinfected, the areas will be reopened for use. Individuals without close or proximate contact with the individual may resume activities in the areas immediately after disinfection. If more than seven days have passed since the individual used an area, additional cleaning/disinfection is not necessary, but routine cleaning and disinfection will continue.

### **Ventilation**

The maintenance department will ensure ventilation systems operate properly and are being controlled as designed. Circulation of outdoor air will be increased as much as possible through both natural and mechanical means. Established HVAC inspection and maintenance requirements will be followed that will preserve our system’s ability to achieve proper ventilation of our buildings. A secondary air purification system is being investigated to further improve ventilation.

### **Hygiene**

South Buffalo Charter School will ensure adherence to the hygiene and sanitization requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NYSDOH document “Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19” and the “STOP THE SPREAD” poster. This information will be used by the SBCS medical professionals and administrators to train faculty and staff.

South Buffalo Charter School will provide hand hygiene stations around the school including hand washing stations (existing in restrooms, various classrooms) with soap, running water, disposable paper towels and hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based

sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content). Employees and students will be instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their day, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. Main entrances, common areas, classrooms, and office spaces will be provided with hand sanitizer that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

South Buffalo Charter School will ensure disinfecting products will be provided and located on/near commonly shared equipment and supplies (e.g. copiers). Prior to use of a shared piece of equipment, an employee should disinfect the surfaces that will be touched. After use of a shared piece of equipment, the employee should disinfect the surfaces that were touched. Employees should then practice hand-washing or hand sanitization procedures. Signs will be posted throughout the facilities reminding employees to stop and sanitize before and after use of equipment and supplies.

Disinfecting products will be provided in various locations throughout the buildings for faculty and staff to disinfect commonly used surfaces periodically throughout the day. Hand sanitizers will be available near high-touch surfaces throughout the building and/or in each room utilized for students.

Receptacles will be available around the school for disposal of soiled items (paper towels, masks, etc). Signs will be posted throughout the facilities to instruct staff and students about proper hand washing procedures and reminding them to hand-wash and/or hand sanitize frequently.

### **Visitors**

Visitors to the building will be limited. In general, the building will be open only to SBCS employees, service providers, contractors, vendors, and delivery people. Parents, building/classroom volunteers, and other guests will not be allowed unless extenuating circumstances are present.

Visitors who buzz for entry to the building will be communicated through the buzzer system only. Office staff will ask the purpose for their visit and whether their business can be accomplished through phone, email, or mail. If they are dropping something off, they should be advised to leave the item at the door.

Only visitors with scheduled meetings with an employee in the building should be allowed in. Visitors will be required to sign in and complete SBCS's health assessment, sanitize their hands upon entry to the building and wear a face covering. Disposable masks will be available for those who need one.

To the extent possible, video and tele-conferencing will be used to accomplish SBCS and student business. Every attempt will be made to avoid in-person meetings.

To the extent possible, deliveries will be made to building loading areas. Delivery people will be requested to wear a face covering when entering the building. Social distancing should be practiced.

### **Absentee Protocols (Employees)**

Accommodations for vulnerable employees with underlying medical conditions or employees who have household members with underlying health conditions will be made to the extent practicable. Employees should contact their supervisor to initiate the discussion. Accommodations may include telework, modified work setting, or additional PPE.

### **Meetings**

Faculty and staff meetings, department meetings, interviews, CSE meetings, training, professional development, and any other situation requiring dense congregations of people will be held using social distancing, or small group, or video or tele-conferencing when possible. Situations requiring in-person gatherings will ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained and will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces. Masks will be required when social distancing is not able to be maintained.

### **Safety Drills (Fire & Lockdown Drills)**

The safety of our employees and students are the top priority. Safety drills (i.e., fire and lockdown drills) will be performed as required, students and staff will wear face coverings and social distance at exit and gathering points outside the building, including modifications to ensure distances between persons. All schools will take under consideration the suggestions made in the NYS guidance document.

### **Code Compliance**

South Buffalo Charter School will ensure:

- All supply/equipment purchases and building alterations will comply with the requirements of the 2020 NYS Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code and the State Energy Conservation Code. Any changes will be submitted to OFP.
- Compliance with the 2020 Annual Visual Inspection (Building Condition Survey requirement is 2021 for SBCS).
- Compliance with the Lead-in-Water testing as required by NYS DOH regulations 67-4 (completed by December 31, 2020).
- All alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be installed in accordance with FCNYS 2020 Section 5705.5
- New construction, temporary quarter projects, new facility leases, and any plans for dividers installed in classrooms, libraries, cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, doors, and other points of congregation will be submitted to OFP for review.
- Any plans to use temporary or permanent tents, any changes to the number of available toilet and sink fixtures, and any purchases of plastic separators will be planned in adherence with BCNYS.
- Adequate drinking water access.

- All building project needs will be submitted as “COVID-19 Reopening”

## **Facilities and Building Procedures**

This section explains building access, classroom layout, cafeteria, personal property rules, playgrounds, hall traffic, arrival and dismissal, and extracurricular procedures.

### **Building Access**

Any student, parent, caregiver, visitor, or staff showing symptoms of COVID-19 (reference CDC and DOH guidelines for COVID-19 symptoms) will be excluded as per DOH Guidelines.

Parents will receive reminders that contain building access questions for each of their children who attend school. Unless parents contact the school nurse to report an issue with a child, receiving the email/text message is indicative of passive agreement on the school screening procedures.

Front office personnel will require visitors to screen as they enter the building. This will include completion of the daily health assessment, temperature check, hand sanitization, and wearing of mask before a visitor is allowed into the school. Documentation will be maintained.

Use of building requests will be vetted to conform with proper social distancing protocol. South Buffalo Charter School will evaluate whether and to what extent external community organizations can safely utilize the site and campus resources. Ensure external community organizations that use the facilities also follow the school’s health and safety plans and relevant guidance.

### **Considerations for All Schools: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, & Common Areas**

- Minimize interaction of students between drop-off and entrance to school facilities.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with parents as much as possible.
- Establish separate entrances and exits to school facilities where possible.
- Create “one-way routes” in hallways.
- Maintain social distancing in hallways and common areas.
- Minimize the number of non-essential interactions between students and staff throughout the school day.
- Create student cohorts, when feasible, as an effective strategy to limit exposure and contact.
- Limit commingling between classes or other SBCS-set groups of students.
- Minimize large group gatherings.

- Provide hand sanitizer at school entrances.
- Put signage around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders (CDC offers printable resources and handwashing posters).
- Increase frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height based on age of students).
- Limit the number of students in the hallway at the same time by staggering release from classrooms.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is quite difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
- Consider a schedule that limits access, if at all, to lockers to keep traffic in the hallways within social distancing protocols.

## **BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Building Access**

Ensure that students and families are educated and engaged in the new expectations related to all health policies and protocols. Communication plans will include written materials (i.e. Handbook), as well as defined times at the beginning of the school year to teach health & safety protocols, with frequent reminders, to review the new policies and procedures.

- Familiarize all participants with areas being used to help 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, and
  - enhanced cleaning/disinfection of surfaces.
- Develop consistent policies to address when clubs, before- and after-school programs, athletic teams or other outside groups may be allowed to use school space.
- The Boys and Girls after school care program is subject to the same procedures as the school day. Care must be taken for participants to wear face coverings and socially distance. Protocols and expectations should be shared and approved through the SBCS Business Office.

### **Arrival & Dismissal**

- Parents are not to drop their student(s) off prior to the start of school.
- Parent Drop-off/Pick-Up will be a designated location outside of the building, coordinated and implemented according to guidelines by designated faculty/staff.
- Vehicle flow and logistics will be considered to accommodate anticipated increase in parent transports.
- Limited numbers of buses will unload at a time in the designated area.

- Limit before/after school activities to ensure time for daily sanitizing and teaching of new health and safety protocols and schedules.
- Students must report to their classroom after temperature checks are complete.
- Students who need breakfast can enter the building to get their food with direction from staff in the parent drop-off or the bus loop, at designated time.
- Teachers will monitor students' use of lockers at both arrival and dismissal, if students can be assigned a locker.
- If parents are signing out at a time other than arrival or dismissal, the procedure will take place in the Health Office or the Main Office, based on purpose, parent ability to be in the building will be limited.
- Drop-off of items to students will be limited to emergency reasons.

### **Classroom Configuration**

- Maximize social distancing between student workstations, achieving 6 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout. Desks should face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), students who cannot maintain six-feet of physical space from others must wear a face covering.
- Tables should only allow for seating on one side.
- Where necessary, assess other space that may be repurposed for storage of instructional materials, to maximize student classroom space.
- Incorporate signage to illustrate social/physical distancing.
- Use outdoor instruction where health and safety conditions and physical space allow.
- Ensure the classroom cohort will have access to washing stations, and plan for hand sanitizer dispensers and access to sanitizing materials for wiping down any spaces after usage each day or, if needed, between groups.
- Each special will follow social distancing guidelines to determine classroom setup and protocols (e.g. Art, P.E., Music, Library)
- Areas and/or classrooms will be designated during the day for students to be socially distance and take a "mask break"

### **Cohorts**

- A "cohort" is a group or team of students and educators with consistent members that stay together throughout the school day.
- When possible, we will have teachers of specific academic content areas rotate, instead of student groups.
- Maximize other safety precautions where cohorts may have contact, such as more close-ly monitored use of facial coverings, hand washing and sanitizing between cohorts.
- Similar design will be implemented for assignment of restrooms, classrooms, and outside space where it is possible to restrict primary use to a single cohort, or consistent group of cohorts.

**Bathroom Facilities Protocols (In-classroom and Shared)**

- The school floor plan will be used to determine the best way to use, assign, and access bathrooms.
- SBCS will create plans to maximize social distance in multi-stall shared bathrooms, hand-washing, and daily bathroom protocols will be reviewed with students and implemented by teachers.
- Schools will designate a time each day where a sanitizing of multi-stall bathrooms is completed.
- Buildings will increase cleaning and disinfection of bathrooms consistent with CDC disinfecting and cleaning guidelines.

**Hall Traffic**

- Masks must be worn at all times by students and staff.
- Single line flow of students- Elementary teachers will line students up in the classroom to leave and monitor the hallways when passing.
- Limit face-to-face encounters by designating foot-traffic patterns — such as one-way hallways and by designating entrance-only and exit-only doors, when feasible.
- Install markings on floors to illustrate foot-traffic expectations.
- Hallway etiquette will be the same as rules of the road (stay to the right)
- Keep traffic moving in the hallways.

**Shared Spaces – Specials (PE, Library, Art, Music)**

- Develop plans for the implementation of a physical education, art, and music curriculum that consider the needs of all students, including focusing on activities, adaptations, and modifications of all education decisions to ensure the full inclusion by all students. (See Sections of Reopening Plan for each of the Special Areas)
- Sanitizer stations available
- Shared spaces will have posted guidelines for capacity restrictions
- Please see social distancing guidelines from earlier in the document.

**Cafeteria**

- Cafeteria Capacity may be reduced and identified cohorts will be scheduled to eat in classrooms.

**Outside Space & Playground**

- Follow all CDC, state, and local guidelines related to social distancing and disinfecting areas and equipment used for physical education and physical activity, including recess.
- Schools should assess ways to minimize exposure from playground and fitness equipment use, including, but not limited to, ensuring only the team cohort uses it at the same time, hand washing before and after use or use of hand sanitizer, and disinfecting fitness equipment or other smaller outside equipment after each group of students' use.



- Consider staggering recess times for each class/cohort.
- Plan increased supervision to monitor social distancing, as appropriate.

## **Child Nutrition**

The Personal Touch Food Service Department will continue to comply with Child Nutrition Program requirements, including all applicable health and safety guidelines, whether we are serving meals to our children in-person or remotely. This includes providing school breakfast and lunch options to students each day who are enrolled in the School Food Authority (SFA). This includes students while in attendance at school and those learning remotely.

Meals may be served in classrooms or other alternate spaces to reduce student density in a cafeteria dining area.

The Personal Touch Food Service Department staff will be monitored on a daily basis by completing the SBCS daily health assessment and by self-monitoring for any COVID-19 type signs and symptoms. All food service staff will be required to wear face coverings at all times while preparing and serving food.

Hand sanitizing stations will be available outside of the cafeteria and students will be required to use hand sanitizer before entering the serving and/or dining areas and upon leaving if the cafeteria is utilized. Students will be encouraged to hand wash, where feasible, before going to the cafeteria/dining area and upon leaving. Meals will be provided while maintaining a social distance of six (6) feet between students, unless an approved barrier is available. Students do not need to wear face coverings once seated and eating as long as they are socially distanced.

At SBCS meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g. classrooms) and/or meal periods may be staggered to maintain social distancing. Where meals are provided in alternate areas and a student assigned to that cohort has a food allergy, families will be instructed to limit lunch contents to allergy-free items. Students with allergies will be accommodated in all scenarios and situations.

Proper cleaning and disinfection will occur in the food service area and cafeteria/dining area between meal periods. Kitchen and serving areas will be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis. Equipment, including high-touch objects will be disinfected daily or more often given the rate of usage. SBCS will ensure the following:

- Gloves, masks, aprons, and other supplies are readily available for department staff.
- Prohibit sharing of food and beverages (buffet style meals, snacks) between students. Students will be reminded by staff and/or through posting of signage.

- Provide at least six (6) feet of physical distance between students by increasing table spacing, removing tables, marking tables as closed, or providing a physical barrier between tables.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, at point of sale and other areas where maintaining physical distance of six (6) feet is difficult.

South Buffalo Charter School will consider the following:

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and signage on walls to ensure that students remain at least six (6) feet apart in food serving lines or while waiting for seating.

## **Transportation**

South Buffalo Charter School does not own or operate any of the buses that transport students. All contracted buses and district buses are required to follow DOH, NYS Guidelines and Transportation Safety guidelines. Many of which are listed below.

Transportation department employees (bus drivers, bus attendants, mechanics, office staff, and custodial) will be monitored on a daily basis by completing their employer's daily health assessment and self-monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to arriving at work, or transporting students. Transportation staff will be required to wear facial coverings at all times while on the school bus and must wear gloves if they have physical contact with a child. They may also wear an optional face shield. Transportation staff may wear their own PPE.

Buses will be disinfected on a daily basis. Drivers will sanitize high-touch surfaces between bus runs to the extent practicable. Roof hatches and windows will be slightly opened when the temperatures are above 45 degrees, weather permitting, to provide ventilation.

Parents will be required to complete health screenings of their children, on a daily basis, before coming to the bus stop. Students and parents will be instructed to maintain six (6) foot distancing at bus stops and while loading and unloading to every extent possible. Students and parents will be instructed to wear a face covering when at bus stops.

Students will be required to wear facial coverings at all times while on the school bus, unless they have a medical condition or disability which would prohibit it. Students without face coverings will not be denied transportation and will be provided a face covering by South Buffalo Charter School. Social distance will be created between children on school buses when possible and while loading and unloading. Students will be instructed to sit with members of the same household if applicable. When buses are loading, students will be required to be seated from the rear of the bus forward. Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

Transportation staff and students will receive initial and periodic refresher training

regarding the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, PPE and proper use of social distancing.

Parents/Guardians will be encouraged to drop-off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses. If necessary, contingency plans will be developed that reduce density on buses.

Buses may be equipped with hand-sanitizer and drivers and attendants may be permitted to carry or dispense hand-sanitizer while on the bus. However, hand sanitizer will be made available to transportation staff within the bus garage.

## **Social Emotional Learning**

**A Comprehensive Counseling program is being developed under the direction of school counselors, administrative team and potential social worker.**

- Even before COVID-19 dramatically changed the context of teaching and learning across the country, there was a growing consensus in education that schools can and should attend to students' social-emotional development. The social-emotional learning skills or the five core social-emotional competencies, as identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) are the foundations for young people's well-being: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. SBCS's school counseling program will be reviewed and updated to meet current needs.

**Establishment of an advisory council or working team within the school to inform the staff of updated plans**

- Learning does not happen without social connection. We recognize that in light of the social disconnections that have occurred in the wake of COVID-19, distance learning cannot occur without first addressing the social-emotional needs of our students, teachers and families. Furthermore, we recognize that to attend to these social emotional learning needs, we must provide the necessary support and resources to all SBCS stakeholders to build a community of collective understanding of how we can attend to students as well as each other.
- Counselors and school social workers will provide student mental health and counseling services with varied options. Staff will prepare and plan to support students returning to school and various mental health needs related to COVID-19.
- SBCS will need to plan for building a broad coalition to integrate academic supports into transition plans, and create and maintain a caring, safe, and supportive environment for all students and adults.
- Create opportunities for staff and students to regularly practice and reflect on their social and emotional competencies.

### **Plan for Resources and Referrals for Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services**

- Consider instructional strategies that best work for SBCS and classroom's context (i.e. community meetings, small group mentoring, brain breaks).
- Have careful conversations with staff and students to discuss the past, current, and future impacts of COVID-19 on themselves and the world around them.
  - Conversations should take part in a safe space where participants demonstrate respect to each other. While deliberate efforts should be made to foster a trauma-sensitive environment, be mindful that these conversations may trigger emotional responses and can also lead to difficult discussions revolving around inequity.
  - Topics you may consider include, but are not limited to:
    - Potential increases in bullying behavior;
    - Grief, loss, and trauma;
    - Mental health and supportive behaviors;
    - Bias, prejudice, and stigma;
    - Preparedness, hope, and resilience; and
    - Fear and anxiety.
- Utilize trained staff, as necessary, to support both staff and students that may feel unnerved by these topics or conversations.
- Re-tool the current Response to Intervention program to fit current situations to ensure appropriate interventions and/or support social-emotional well-being of our students.

Creating a positive school climate and culture will address the issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic and improve the conditions for learning for all students in any of the in-person, hybrid, or virtual instructional models. To optimize the learning process, students and staff need to feel cared for, reengaged, and acclimated to the school community, so we can deliver instruction most effectively. In order to improve school culture and climate, SBCS should:

- Assess the school climate to identify vulnerabilities and implement evidence-based strategies to address identified needs.
- Plan to provide and sustain instruction on social norms, relationship building, and behavioral expectations beginning at the start of the school year.

### **Professional development for how to talk to students about the on-going health crisis, as well as support for developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff.**

- Provide professional development to support educators.
- Integration of SEL in their teaching, including the skills to foster positive learning environments and techniques for embedding SEL into instruction (in-person and remote and/or virtual instruction).
- Understanding and utilization of trauma-informed practices.

- Protocol for identifying and supporting students who may be experiencing social-emotional, behavioral, and mental health challenges.
- Establish systems that promote supportive staff-student relationships to ensure that students have caring staff members who check regularly with them for any needed support.
- Be proactive in preparing access to mental health and trauma supports for adults and students, which may include establishing partnerships with outside entities and agencies. Planning should include the methods for continually conveying information on how to access both school and community support to students, staff, and families in all learning environments (in-person, hybrid, and virtual).

## **School Schedules**

South Buffalo Charter School is planning for three instructional models (in-person, remote learning, or hybrid learning) for the 2020-2021 school year. Stakeholder input will be gathered and considered for each model, especially those models that require students to participate in remote instruction (i.e., at home in a virtual setting).

In any of the three instructional models, students at South Buffalo Charter School will be taught in accordance with the applicable New York State Learning Standards

### **In-Person Model**

All staff and students will attend school in the physical building for a full day on each scheduled school day and instruction will be delivered in traditionally scheduled courses/subject areas with established precautions for maintaining health and safety. Social distancing measures will be in place and masks are to be worn. Using this model, students will be present and involved in the school environment. In addition, instructional programs, for the most part, will maintain their current integrity.

### **Hybrid Model**

Students will attend school with an altered schedule to reduce student population within the building and each classroom to approximately 50%. Students would attend school in-person for a portion of a day or a portion of a week and the rest of the time they would engage in remote instruction. Social distancing measures will be in place and masks are to be worn as part of this model. Using this model, students will be present and in the school building participating (for a portion of the time) in learning activities in a smaller group setting.

During the time that students are not present for in-person instruction, they will receive a combination of asynchronous and synchronous instruction from a certified teacher. Students and teachers will have regular substantive interaction that includes routine scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback/support from their teachers. Attendance will be taken during remote instruction to monitor teacher and student interactions and maintain progress.

## Hybrid Scenario

Please Note: This list is not all inclusive, other options could be explored outside of this listing. All numbers of student attendance days listed below each option are a current estimate based on the days listed on the district calendar.

- Students will attend school in-person two days per week.

Hybrid Option: an assigned group of students would attend school on Monday and Tuesday and participate in remote instruction on Thursday and Friday. A second assigned group would attend school on Thursday and Friday.

Wednesday would be a remote learning day for all students to set aside for office hours, Academic Intervention Services, Related Services, Professional Development or other activities as needed. Teachers would report each day, except Wednesday.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A (in-school)	Group A (in-school)	Remote Instruction for all	Group A (remote)	Group A (remote)
Group B (remote)	Group B (remote)	Remote Instruction for all	Group B (in-school)	Group B (in-school)

*Group A - 74 in person days 109 remote learning days.*

*Group B - 68 in person days 114 remote learning days.*

*\*When school resumes in the hybrid model and it is found that South Buffalo Charter School can accommodate more families than originally planned the hybrid model may be adjusted by administration as needed.*

*\*Current calendar may be adjusted for second semester to accommodate a more equal in person learning days.*

## Remote Model

Students will not attend school in the physical building. Instruction will be conducted digitally through online methods. The structure of the classes, expectations for students and teachers, and protocols for taking attendance, delivering lessons and instructional materials, assessing student work, and grading/providing feedback will be explained.

Students will receive a combination of asynchronous and synchronous instruction from a certified teacher. Students and teachers will have substantive interaction and attendance will be taken. Students at South Buffalo Charter School will be taught in accordance with the applicable state standards.

In the above mentioned models South Buffalo Charter School understands the need for equity and accessibility. South Buffalo Charter School will work with families to ensure access to

reliable internet connections, technology.

### **High-Needs Students**

Students considered high-needs may be prioritized for full-time in-person learning when feasible. For example, if SBCS is not providing in-person instruction, certain programs and services may be provided in person on a limited basis to high needs students to meet their unique needs for instruction and other supports.

## **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism**

### **Absenteeism**

South Buffalo Charter School is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. SBCS recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation, and therefore, has developed a comprehensive attendance policy.

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure will be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's regulations. This information will be collected in Power School, South Buffalo Charter School's student management system. An absence, tardiness, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the SBCS code for the reason.

South Buffalo Charter School has determined that absences, tardiness, and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- A. *Excused*: An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, medical appointments, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or administratively approved school-sponsored activities or other such extraordinary reasons as approved by the administration.
- B. *Unexcused*: An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

For accountability purposes, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of enrolled school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused.

South Buffalo Charter School will implement intervention strategies for students who are at risk of becoming chronically absent.

Attendance will be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- A. For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade 4 (i.e., self-

contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as art, music, physical education), the student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day.

- B. For students in grade 5, each student's presence or absence will be recorded after taking of attendance in Math or ELA period of scheduled instruction.
- C. For students in grades 6 through 8, each student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction. Any absence for a school day or portion thereof will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this plan.
- D. In the event that a student at any instructional level from grades K through 8 arrives late for, or departs early from, scheduled instruction, the tardiness or early departure will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this plan.

At the conclusion of each school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness, or early departure will be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established South Buffalo Charter School procedures.

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated South Buffalo Charter School personnel will pursue the following:

- A. Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, time frame, type of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- B. Contact South Buffalo Charter School staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent or person in parental relation will be contacted;
- C. Discuss with appropriate personnel strategies to directly intervene with specific element;
- D. Recommend interventions to administration or his/her designee if it relates to change in South Buffalo Charter School policy or procedure;
- E. Implement strategies, as approved by appropriate administration;
- F. Utilize appropriate South Buffalo Charter School and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- G. Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

## **Technology and Connectivity**

### **Access**

Consistent and reliable access to high-speed internet at sufficient levels allows students and teachers to fully participate in remote/hybrid learning models. SBCS has conducted multiple surveys for students and parents since March 2020 to determine the internet connectivity for



students and faculty. South Buffalo Charter School will communicate with teachers and parents the proper steps to take if there are connectivity issues, or if they are in need of MiFis (hotspots), or some other form of internet connectivity. These communications will occur via phone, website, and email.

### **Devices**

We are moving toward a 1:1 model for Fall 2020 where each student in SBCS will be assigned a Chromebook (1-8) and a similar version of a tablet (K). Details of this plan will be forthcoming.

South Buffalo Charter School has established a help desk for families to request assistance, through an email, and will create a series of documents to assist students, parents, and teachers with technology and the platforms used by the SBCS.

### **Learning Standards**

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the inequitable access of technology and internet services in students' places of residence was a priority to be addressed. Our plan provides all students' access to their own Chromebook or tablet and potential internet connectivity for those that do not have access in their homes.

Ongoing Professional Development is provided for principals and teachers to design effective remote/online learning experiences utilizing best practices for instruction in remote online settings.

Through the use of our SBCS IT Department and teacher mentors, we are able to provide ongoing support with technology to students, parents, and families.

## **Teaching and Learning, Academics**

The following section describes instructional models, prioritizing standards, academic gaps and interventions, structures and expectations for K-8 hybrid/remote learning, and considerations for supporting diverse learners. Based on guidance from the NYSED, the DOH, and the Governor, South Buffalo Charter School will determine the instructional model for the 2020-2021 school year. All core and special area courses will follow the specifications of the determined model.

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

South Buffalo Charter School has focused on ensuring alignment of coursework vertically, horizontally, and to the applicable standards to provide clarity around what will be taught and what students should learn. Regardless of delivery model, the expectation is that students will be provided with the same content knowledge and skills from all the teachers of a given course/grade level.

### **Academic Gaps and Interventions**

South Buffalo Charter School has established instructional practices and procedures for implementing SBCS-wide initiatives that address a Response to Intervention (RtI) process applicable to all students. South Buffalo Charter School will provide appropriate prevention, intervention and/or remediation while ensuring high quality instruction and access to grade level standards for all as allowed by re-opening plans.

Response to Intervention is structured as a three-tiered program. Tier 1 provides Prevention through standard based, high quality, differentiated instruction. Tier 2 provides Intervention through targeted grouping with essential standard focused instruction. Tier 3 provides Remediation through smaller groups. (1-3 students)

### **Structures and Expectations for K-8 Hybrid/Remote Learning**

A predefined set of structures has been established for hybrid/remote learning. When planning for and delivering instruction, all faculty and staff will follow the expectations outlined below:

#### **Systems Management**

Grades K-8 will use Google Classroom to post assignments, communicate with students and parents, create assessments, and share digital information.

Google Classroom is used to plan, deliver, and manage the learning content for hybrid/remote instruction. Content is created in other applications, uploaded, and organized within the Google Classroom. Learning content may include documents, videos, learning activities, and assessments.

- All students will be provided with an electronic device for use at home.
- Portable connections to the internet can be provided for students who do not have an internet connection at home.
- Keep and/or establish a regular school schedule with times for course/subject area instruction. Times established by K-4, 5-8 grade level bands.
- Take attendance in Powerschool for each instructional session.

#### **Communication Protocols for Students and Families**

- Provide clear communication to students and families to share course expectations and online learning participation expectations, including set office hours and opportunities to collaborate with educators.
  - SBCS welcome letter sent to all students and families including directions for parent access to the Google Classroom.
  - Teachers will follow-up and welcome all students and families outlining class/course schedule and online participation expectations, including teacher contact information.
  - Teachers will respond in a timely manner to all instructionally relevant emails, discussion board posts, and submitted work. (Suggested best

practice: Emails & discussion boards - 24 hours; and submitted work - 72 hours)

- In addition to daily class meetings, teachers will host regular office hours for individual student questions (Suggested Best Practice: two sessions each week)
- Establish remote classroom materials access for students and families
  - Provide guidance and ensure all students are able to login to all systems that are a part of the class/course
  - Setup, test, and troubleshoot hardware in the audio/video enabled meeting space
  - Communicate protocol for logistical and technical help

### **Setting Learning Objectives**

- Establish weekly learning targets that are posted to the teachers Google Classroom with clear instructions that can be followed on- or off-site.
- Create standards-aligned lessons that work toward mastery of the learning targets for instruction in a traditional classroom, adhering to health and safety recommendations.
- Provide resources for students to create evidence of their knowledge in a variety of formats to demonstrate mastery.
- Create customized learning pathways, where learning goals and objectives are linked to explicit directions for completion.
- Ensure targets are being met to provide quality off-site instruction to include regular check-ins with students on a daily/weekly/set intervals.
- Students will be provided with reasonable amount of time and support for assignments, activities, and assessments in consideration of the diverse home experiences for remote learning as needed.

### **Engagement Strategies and Online Tools**

**Asynchronous Learning:** asynchronous learning occurs when students work independently on learning activities and assignments in a virtual setting. Teachers provide lesson content through written materials and visual presentations. Students show what they know by completing interactive learning activities, self-grading and teacher graded assessments, and teacher graded written work and projects.

**Synchronous Learning** - synchronous learning occurs when students join an audio/video enabled meeting at the same time in a virtual setting. This space is greatly enhanced when the meeting includes an interactive opportunity to chat or break out into separate discussions. This synchronous session may include whole group instruction led by the instructor and small group work amongst the learners.

- Using video conferencing (Google Meet) software for live (synchronous) lesson instruction.
  - One way to keep students engaged in the learning process during the lesson is to pose questions that they must respond to. Students who may

not raise their hand in a face-face classroom may feel more comfortable sharing a response in chat. Students can also ask questions and provide insights during the lesson.

- Wait time is important when asking questions in the classroom. This gives students time to prepare a response. Wait time is especially important in the virtual classroom. Students may have delays in video and audio feed due to equipment, network, or bandwidth limitations. Students may type or click at different speeds.
- During class meetings, instructors can use GSuite and other online tools to keep learners engaged in the material. Design activities that learners must respond to using the by typing or drawing. Remember that using the interactive tools may be new for some learners. Offer a practice activity (scavenger hunt) to give them the time and opportunity to figure out how the tools work. When assigning any Google type document through Google Classroom, use the setting “make a copy for each student” so that progress is visible to the teacher as the student works on it. It will also provide information on when the student opens the document.
- Video conference lessons can be recorded (asynchronous) and the saved file can easily be shared with students.

## **Special Education**

### **Free and Appropriate Public Education**

- In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), each student with a disability has unique needs that must be addressed. The Committees on Special Education (CSE) develop an individual education plan (IEP) for each student with specific student needs, programs, related services, and accommodations.
- Procedures to address the return to school of medically fragile students and students with physical or health impairments may require accommodations and modifications that are noted on the Individual Education Plan.
- The Pupil Personnel Department has maintained communication frequently with the families of students with significant medical risk factors to determine if additional precautions or unique measures are necessary prior to a student’s return to school.
- Plans for in-person, hybrid, and remote learning will generally follow previously noted SBCS plans but individualization of these modes of instruction may be necessary to deliver specific programs and services. Also, NYSED guidance in March 2020 indicates that IEPs need not be amended if schools convert to online or virtual learning platforms.

### **Documentation and Communication**

- Notwithstanding the COVID-19 restrictions of implementing students’ plans, the IEP is a framework for meeting the needs of each student with a disability. As

needed, the CSE will meet to reexamine the needs of our students to recommend how to best meet their needs during the public health emergency situation. Special education staff will document the provision of programs and services in a consistent fashion including the completion of IEP progress reports. This staff will also communicate to parents via phone, email, or other means on a regular basis in the parents' preferred language or mode of communication.

### **Parent Engagement**

- Communication with parents/guardians will be provided in the language preference of the students' families, in accordance with federal and state requirements. The mode of communication includes but not limited to interpreting services, closed captioning and teleconferencing with sign language.

### **Collaboration**

- The CSE will continue to review and develop plans to provide services for students. The progress monitoring of goals and development of specially designed instruction will be implemented consistently. Special education staff will continue to regularly monitor and communicate progress to parents.

### **Physical Distancing in Special Education Settings**

Special education personnel should remain flexible in determining physical distancing procedures for students with unique challenges in areas such as behavior, social-emotional levels, and activities of daily living.

- Procedures for safely providing related services and evaluating students will be developed that incorporate distancing or other safety precautions such as wearing face coverings, face shields, or using physical barriers.
- SBCS will develop any necessary adjustments for specific students with disabilities such as students with extensive support needs, behavioral challenges, etc.
- When considering distancing procedures, it is important to consider and allow students with disabilities access to peers in the least restrictive setting.

### **Mandatory accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids, technology to meet the unique disability needs of students.**

- Teachers, related service providers, and teacher aides will always wear facial coverings when working with students who are unable to wear face coverings for medical or programmatic reasons.
- Some teachers or related service personnel may need face coverings that have a clear opening so that students can see their teacher or therapist's mouth.
- School staff may also need to wear face shields when working with students that have a tendency to spit.
- Access to accommodations, modifications, supplementary aides, and technology will be provided as indicated in IEPs. If instruction is provided online, flexibility in providing this access will be necessary.

### **Planning for Medically Vulnerable and/or High Risk**

Employees or students who are medically vulnerable or in high risk groups, as defined by NYSDOH, or live with family members who are medically vulnerable or in high risk groups may need additional accommodations to ensure social distancing. The SBCS will consider how school staff can honor social distancing recommendations, yet meet unique medical, personal, or support needs. Each medically vulnerable individual will have a unique plan to best meet the individual's needs at school while protecting their health and safety. Areas to consider include:

- Determine how adequate space and facilities will be utilized to maintain health and safety of students and staff, especially when tending to an individual's medical or personal needs.
- Build in flexibilities to keep individuals connected and included in the class and school community regardless of how much physical time they are able to attend school.
- Determine any special or unique needs for individuals with disabilities related to planned SBCS or schoolwide procedures and protocols related to the following:
  - Daily health screening and/or temperature checks.
  - Restroom use as well as diapering and toileting
  - Paths of travel
  - Use of campuses for recess or recreational activities

## **Bilingual Education and English Language Learners**

### **English Language Learners**

South Buffalo Charter School will continue to administer the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) and conduct the individual interviews as the first steps of the ELL identification process. Parents may complete and submit the HLQ digitally. Qualified personnel will be available to determine if a language other than English is spoken at home. An individual interview with students and/or parents may be conducted remotely by qualified personnel. The interview will include a review of the student's abilities or work samples including:

- Reading and writing in English
- Reading and writing in the student's home language
- Mathematics

These items are collected or generated during the interview and may include writing samples or exercises completed at the time of the interview. Parents/guardians can submit the work samples through email, through pictures of the students' work, and/or by using other digital platforms.

SBCS will maintain all documents related to its students, including the HLQ, the individual interview, and any other records generated as part of this remote identification

process.

Please note: The English Language Learner (ELL) identification process will be completed within 30 school days for students who enrolled during the COVID-19 school closures in 2019-2020, as well as all students who enrolled during the summer of 2020, and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-2021 school year. After this 20 day flexibility period, identification of ELLs will resume for all students within required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

### **Communicating with Multilingual Families**

Communication with parents/guardians will be provided in the language preference of the students' families, in accordance with federal and state requirements.

Communication with parents of our ELLs will occur on a timely basis by both the general education and ENL teacher to ensure student engagement and progress.

### **Continuity of ELL Services**

ENL teachers will continue to provide appropriate instruction, including required units of study based on the most recent measure of English language proficiency (i.e., NYSESLAT), and support to all students with English language acquisition needs. For students unable to attend school, SBCS will strive to provide remote ELL services to the greatest extent possible, including targeted and scaffolded instruction and support.

- Teachers will utilize each student's level of language proficiency to design instruction with appropriate scaffolds that support continuity of learning and take individual students' levels of language proficiency into account as instruction is planned with the appropriate scaffolds.
- ENL teachers, as well as content area teachers co-teaching with ENL teachers in Integrated ENL courses, will provide instruction and support to all ELLs in their classes, as well as remotely. ENL and content area teachers will work collaboratively to address the needs of all the ELLs they are teaching, including differentiating grade level materials and instruction.

## **Teacher and Administrative Evaluation System**

The measures that are used as part of the implemented teacher and principal evaluation provide useful information to SBCS administrators and the educators that are being evaluated. This also helps to ensure equitable access to effective educators for all students so that they are given the skills to succeed. South Buffalo Charter School will continue to provide feedback and support to teachers through the evaluation process that will support them as we transition to distance learning. Both the student performance and observation subcomponents increase the quality of discussions taking place and focus on student growth and learning. SBCS will

continue to provide targeted professional development opportunities and feedback on how to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students whether in the classroom or the virtual environment.

## **Athletics**

**\*At the time of publication of the NYSDOH Interim Guidance (Dated July 13, 2020) there are no Interscholastic Sporting events that are allowed to take place.**

## **Conclusion**

Thank you for taking the time to read the South Buffalo Charter School Re-entry Plan.

Please fill out the upcoming required survey of your intention to send your child to school or keep them as full-time distance learners. Information will be coming in next week.