

WESTBRIDGE ACADEMY REMOTE INSTRUCTION PLAN

Introduction

Westbridge Academy (WBA) is a unique school in which students with behavioral, emotional and learning disabilities learn how to face their issues to forge productive, fulfilling lives. Westbridge Academy is not a member of NJSIAA.

With warmth and a progressive, nurturing approach, we provide a dependable, structured environment that supports every student's well-being – one day, one child at a time. Our objective is to help each student reach his or her full potential by strengthening academic and social skills through an individualized therapeutic and educational program.

In order to best serve students from public schools, we focus our sights on returning students to their local school districts with enhanced confidence, coping skills, abilities and knowledge. We also conduct state testing right at the school, so there is no need to transport the students to another venue.

Remote Instruction Planning

A Schedule Inclusive of In-Person Instruction

The Westbridge Academy plan for the school year includes a schedule for resuming in-person instruction and provides school facilities for 184 days during the regular school year and 16 days during the summer.

Scheduling decisions have been informed by careful evaluation of N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, CDC health and safety standards and the most up to date guidance from New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), as well as the input of our stakeholders about the needs of all students and the realities of each unique district that we serve.

In the event Westbridge Academy pivots to remote instruction, WBA will provide remote learning services daily from 9:00am to 1:00pm.

Consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3., each student will be provided with at least four hours of instructional contact time per school day, or one continuous session of two and one-half hours for kindergarten students. Instructional time will be achieved through synchronous remote or asynchronous remote activities.

Full-Time Remote Learning Services Policy and Preparation Measures to Strengthen Remote Learning Capabilities

As per Westbridge Academy policy we are fully prepared to shift back to full-time remote learning services if circumstances change and the above noted guidelines can no longer be met. The Westbridge Academy curriculum is fully accessible via Google Classroom which can be accessed equally at home and in school for all Westbridge Academy students.

As we prepare to improve resuming in-person instruction, Westbridge Academy will embark on additional professional development in the areas of educational technology, Google classroom and the supporting Learner Active Technology Infused Classroom instructional approach. Additionally, Westbridge Academy will be able to further adjust our plans even more rapidly due to ongoing training, preparation and professional development in the above noted areas if new guidelines and laws on the local, state, and federal levels emerge.

In regard to delivery of related services, all related services will continue to be provided at or above the expectation prescribed by each student's IEP via teleconferencing software programs.

All related announcements will be made through the Westbridge Academy Alert Messaging System. Westbridge Academy is committed to ensuring that everyone's safety, well-being and educational needs are being met.

Digital Divide

In part, WBA, an approved private school for students with disabilities, is fortunate to have a small school with a very similar overall student profile. Under our reopening plan we are able to provide what boils down to 4:1 instruction. The low teacher-student ratio is critical in ensuring access to the requisite educational technology, regardless of it being issued by the school or provided by the student's family. Additionally, Westbridge Academy teachers and staff have been issued mobile phones in order to better support remote learning by offering readily available two-way live communication with students and families to mitigate academic and/or behavioral/emotional lapses.

In order to identify and document students in need of educational technology throughout the school year, the WBA administrative team issues periodic parent/guardian technology access surveys and teachers supplement this effort by documenting all student contacts as they specifically inquire about digital access on a daily basis. The data is compiled and shared with the clinical and administrative teams each day.

Currently, 100% of the students have internet access and have been issued one Chromebook. In the event that a student is identified as in need of support our Technology Response Team (TRT) is deployed to identify and rectify the issue. Then, the TRT completes a report for immediate submission to the teacher, clinical team and the administration. All TRT reports are continually reviewed daily until the issue has been entirely rectified.

Concerns about the “digital divide” have been central to the WBA remote learning plan as substantial measures were taken to address the “digital divide.” WBA ensured that all staff and students not only were issued the necessary software and hardware but were also provided training. Additionally, steps were taken to ensure that the internet is available for all WBA students.

Westbridge Academy students will be issued Chromebooks this fall. Internet access will also be made available if it is needed through the use of a hotspot.

WBA is also prepared to offer a traditional paper/pencil based instructional activity option which will continue to be afforded to 100% of the WBA student population in the event that digital access becomes a learning barrier down the road.

Meals

Regarding school meals, Westbridge Academy receives students from all over New Jersey and would continue to offer meals to eligible students at the school.

Conclusion

Westbridge Academy students have complex disabilities and are more vulnerable than the general education population. Therefore, schools such as Westbridge Academy that serve these students will need to consider their unique needs when transitioning to a remote instruction plan is necessary.

The Westbridge Academy Response Committee (WBARC) will continue to monitor all federal, state, local and health guidelines in order to develop further guidance regarding how to better support students in reaching their IEP goals while ensuring safety and well-being for the entire school community.