



Nadine G. Ekstrom
Executive Director

Dear EDCO Collaborative Families/Guardians/Caregivers,

I am writing to follow up with our EDCO families and community as the COVID-19 crisis continues to be a topic of concern. As you know, the health and safety of all of our families, staff, and students are our highest priority when making difficult decisions. Since last Wednesday, the Program Directors and Senior Leadership have been talking, strategizing, and planning for the well-being of our organization's students, staff, and families.

The Governor announced that all public and private schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are to remain closed until April 7th. However, this ordinance *excludes* public and private day placements, as they have the ability to remain open. Furthermore, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education encourages sending districts to continue to provide transportation for students who attend these programs.

EDCO Collaborative's Bedford office has decided to remain closed for two weeks, beginning March 16th to March 27th. **As of today, our plan is to open school for the Bedford school programs (Partners, North Crossing Academy, ABCD, and Career Pathways) starting on Monday, March 30th.** We will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with all of you if there are any changes or if this re-opening is delayed based on recommendations/guidelines put forth by our Massachusetts Governor.

EDCO Collaborative's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program in Newton, will be following the protocols of Newton Public Schools. The Youth Alternative Program in Charlestown, will be following the protocols of Boston Public Schools.

We are addressing the following areas of focus during this time:

Social Distancing:

What is the purpose of social distancing? How does this help society? Please read to learn more about social distancing: <https://medium.com/@ariadnelabs/social-distancing-this-is-not-a-snow-day-ac21d7fa78b4>

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Facility Cleanliness:

On Friday, March 13, 2020, EDCO custodial staff thoroughly cleaned the Bedford building. They will continue to remain in the building to ensure the deep cleaning is complete and prepared for staff and student return on Monday, March 30th.

Food Services:

We understand that with the uncertainty at this time, families may be concerned with being able to provide breakfast and lunch to their students during the closure. Please reach out to your local school district if you require breakfast or lunch. If there is any difficulty at all with access issues contact us and we would be happy to assist.

Medications:

If Bedford students have medications in the school nurse's office, please contact the program director who can assist you with a time to pick up the medication.

Learning Opportunities:

Staff and program administrators have been designing and recommending enrichment activities for our students to provide continuous learning opportunities during this challenging time. It is important to remember that the purpose of these activities is to enhance our learning.

Please feel free to contact me or your program director at any time. We are here to support you and your family during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Nadine G. Ekstrom, Ph.D.
Executive Director EDCO Collaborative

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