



COVID-19 Update

April 13, 2020: NECC's day school and home-based services remain suspended, while the residential program remains open. The 138 students in our 15 residential homes are safe and continuing with their programs at the residences.

Direct-care staff working with our students continue to follow proper protocols, including wearing personal protective equipment, practicing frequent hand-washing and sanitizing surfaces at the residences throughout the day. These staff are self-isolating when not on shift to mitigate the potential risk for contracting the virus. NECC is providing extended stay hotel rooms for **84** staff currently to assist in that precaution.

March 30, 2020: The following update was shared with NECC staff

- <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-travel-guidelines-and-new-health-care-resources-to>
 - *Beginning March 27, all travelers arriving to Massachusetts are instructed to self-quarantine for 14 days.*
 - While essential workers are exempt from this requirement we are asking all employees to remain in Massachusetts and report to your supervisor and EMT any travel outside of Mass (aside from a daily commute to work). If you travel, outside of Massachusetts you will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Thank you so much for the many offers to help to provide contacts with access to PPE. We have adequate supply at the moment and a large shipment that is expected this week, but we are also planning in case there are delays in shipping.
 - Cloth face masks: while we may need to resort to cloth face masks later in this crisis, they come with risks if not used properly. At this time, please use the disposable face masks when needed.
 - If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection.
 - Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing.
 - Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
 - If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.

March 16, 2020: Given the national emergency and in consultation with state officials, **NECC will be closing the Day School and will suspend home-based services until at least April 7, 2020.** The NECC Residential Program will remain open and fully staffed.



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March 13, 2020: (Letter to the NECC Community)

Dear NECC Community,

This is the first global pandemic of our lifetime, and information and communication is challenging and continuously changing. I appreciate everyone's concern and can assure you that we are regularly updating our prevention and response efforts based on new information as we receive it.

The dedication and commitment of our professionals have carried us through crises before, and I am confident we will push through this pandemic. We have formally established an Emergency Management Team, consisting of senior executives and medical professionals. They are solely focused on planning our companywide preparedness and response efforts. This Team communicates updates with the entire NECC community (including LEAs, families, and staff), and will continue to work diligently until the pandemic is over as it surely will be. To streamline communication, please direct all questions to emergencymanagement@necc.org, and we will respond as swiftly as possible.

Please note that we are in daily contact with the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) as well as the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and senior officials of the Baker administration before we implement any policies. In conjunction with those agencies and senior state officials, we monitor all recommendations and updates from the federal government.

The current recommendation for schools is to individually evaluate the overall risk of remaining open before planning any school closure. The safety of students and staff has been our highest priority for 45 years. NECC and its highly trained professionals have always been committed to providing services to our students and their families 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year without interruption. NECC has never closed because of your commitment to providing services to our students. As education and human service professionals, we have always embraced a commitment to go above and beyond to serve our students and families. You have always been willing to provide services regardless of circumstances, and that is why we are the finest program for children with autism in the world.

Based on our daily discussions with public officials, this decision is subject to change. DESE and DPH have made it clear that schools remaining open does not violate any rules about large gatherings. However, in keeping with recommendations, we are proactively restricting certain shared environments such as the gym. For the last few weeks, our maintenance department has been massively increasing sanitization efforts across the school. In advance of the pandemic, we purchased electrostatic cleaning machines to sanitize shared areas



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professionally. Additionally, we will now start screening all visitors both to the main facility and residential houses.

We feel that we must continue to provide services to our students who require systematic instruction to maintain learned skills and manage their challenging behavior. We know that sending our students home for long periods of time would significantly impact the progress they have made and the stability of their families.

This is a rapidly changing situation, and we urge you to continuously check your email. We are regularly reviewing and updating our policies and procedures linked below. <https://necc.box.com/s/qpws5s88qzrsm7duij8clhrtx1xge5t3>

This is a time of high anxiety for all of us. If we focus on our mission and support for each other as we always have, we will push through the pandemic. As you have done since the fall, **we need all staff, regardless of job title, to make every effort to help support our students and direct care staff.**

This is a time for everyone to stay home and practice social distancing, good hygiene, and take advantage of Netflix, Amazon, or the streaming service of your choice. I think we all know how important we are to our students and their families. Isn't that why we do the work in the first place, because we strive to make a difference every day?

We have developed plans for every contingency we can think of if there or that others can think of, if there is a case of COVID-19 among our students or staff. If and when needed, we will close the school under the direction of DPH, disinfect it according to recommendations, and under their guidance, we will reopen as swiftly as possible. We will do everything we can to remain in continuous operation as we have for the last 45 years.

Thank you for your continued dedication, patience, and support. As always, we will get through this challenging time together. **#TeamNECC**

With Gratitude,
Vinnie Strully Jr., Founder, and CEO

March 13, 2020: (Coronavirus Q&A for Parents)

Dear NECC Parents and Guardians,



We first want to thank you all for your support and patience as we work through this unique, situation. We ask that you remain patient with us as we are trying to keep everyone safe and healthy. We have put together some Q and A's for you.

Q: If I am home with my child, what are some preventions?

A: NECC encourages families to follow the guidelines set in place by DPH. For more information please go their website listed.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-prevention-and-treatment>

Q: If my child in the residential program is on a home visit, and I'm concerned they become ill, what should I do?

A: If you choose to take your residential child home, and they become ill, please contact NECC. Below is a chart regarding who to contact and when. The NECC nursing department will give recommendations and contact Dr. Bottar, your child's pediatrician.

Monday thru Friday	8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Contact your child's team nurse
Monday thru Friday	After 4:00 p.m.	Contact your child's residence
Saturday Enrichment	8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	Contact the main nursing number X 3146
Saturday and Sunday	All day	Contact your child's residence

*If you contact your child's residence they will reach out to the nurse on call. The nurse on call will then follow up with you.

Q: If I recently traveled internationally, and I want to see my child, what are the recommendations?

A: NECC recommends that anyone who has traveled internationally not enter the residence. We encourage parents to utilize Facetime or Skype apps to ensure the safety of our staff and students.

Q: Am I allowed to come to the residence to visit?

A: Yes. Please follow the typical procedures in place for notifying the residence of your visit. Visitors will be asked the following questions before entering the residence.

- Do you have any of the following symptoms as outlined by the MA DPH Congregate Care Program guidance?



- Temperature (above 100.3)
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Sneezing
 - Shortness of breath
 - Have you traveled out of the country in the last 14 days?
 - Have you or someone you had close personal contact with participated in the Biogen meeting in Boston?
 - Have you or someone in your household been exposed to the virus?
 - Have you or someone in your household been told to self-quarantine?
- *If the visitor says yes,
- Visitor will be asked to wait outside/in their car while the team follows up with a supervisor. Visitors will be asked for a cell phone number so the nurse can give them a call.
- *If the visitor says no,
- We will be taking all visitors temperatures before entering the residence.
 - All visitors are asked to wash their hands thoroughly before the visit.

We are supporting parent visits in a single room at the residence, without other students around. Teams will identify a room at the residence for these purposes. After the visit staff should wipe down all high-touch areas (door handles, tables, surfaces, seats, with disinfecting wipes. The student will wash their hands after the visit.

Q: I usually have a staff with me when I visit with my child. Can this still happen?

A: Given the ever changing situation, please call the residence before your visit and see if we are able to have a staff with you during your visit. We ask for your understanding if we are unable to have a staff accompany you on the visit. If you are unsure if the visit should take place without a staff person available for you, please reschedule.

Q: Does NECC plan to close the school?

A: NECC does not plan to close. NECC is working hard with various departments (DPH, CDC, DESE) to keep all of our staff and students safe and are following their recommendations. We understand this is an evolving situation and appreciate your understanding. To review the DESE press release, please click the link below. <https://necc.app.box.com/file/633704163908>

Q: If my child's school district or Southboro Public Schools is closed, what should I do?



A: Due to the complicated and fluid situation regarding COVID-19, we ask that all families and employees to check their email and text messages regularly for updates, especially regarding school closures. **NECC will make independent decisions based on the health and safety of our students and staff.** All decisions about school closures will be communicated. We recommend that parents confirm with their school district to confirm transportation for your child.

Q: Do you have a plan for remote learning?

A: In the event of a closing of our school building, NECC's residential students will continue to have educational programming during school hours at their residence. Staff will have access to all of the student's curriculum and instructional materials in that environment. We are planning for remote learning opportunities for our day students by preparing materials to share with parents.

Parents of our day students will be given access to Box folders with their child's curriculum and instructional materials related to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives. We are prioritizing making materials for at least one objective in each domain area accessible, and we will then add more materials for more objectives as possible. These materials will include a PDF version of a streamlined lesson plan and data sheet from the ACE and related materials needed to implement the lesson. Parents will also be given access to general educational resources such as digital resources and instructional enrichment activity suggestions.

Q: In the event I, a NECC parent, get notice of a presumptive positive case of COVID-19 or need to quarantine, Should I notify NECC?

A: Yes! If you have a presumptive positive case of COVID-19 or are quarantine, please contact the Office of Enrollment and Family Support at Enrollmentfamilysupport@necc.org or at 508-481-1015 ext. 3292.

Q: What steps are being taking to keep NECC safe?

A:

- NECC is working with the Town Board of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), The Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE) and we are implementing the recommended DPH and CDC guidelines.
- We have instituted additional cleanings at the residences, the school, our vans and all areas our staff and students may encounter daily.
- We are limiting community movement and vocational activities.



- We will be limiting visitors to the program including IEP meetings, parent clinics, etc. and before you come into our buildings or before we come into your homes, we will be asking a series of questions to you.
- We are asking our staff to take all recommended precaution (Continue good personal hygiene, avoid any large gatherings including conferences, avoid travel).
- There is a team of Senior Executives meeting and monitoring updates regularly to ensure safety of our staff and students.

Q: Will I continue to receive communication from NECC?

A: Yes. Please expect an increased level of communication from NECC. In the event we get notice of a presumptive positive case or need to quarantine a group of people, we will be sure to let you know. Thank you for your patience and understanding as this is an ever evolving situation.

Q: Can I send food to the residence?

A: NECC is currently not allowing home prepared food into the residence. If you would like to provide teams with meals, NECC is recommending ordering delivery takeout meals only.

Q: Who should I contact at NECC if I have a question regarding the Coronavirus, COVID-19 situation?

A: The Office of Enrollment and Family Support is happy to assist in answering any questions parents have regarding the safety of their child, Enrollmentfamilysupport@necc.org.



March 12, 2020: (Letter to the NECC Community)

Dear NECC Community,

As you know, the Governor of Massachusetts declared a state of emergency for our state out of concern for the spread of the Coronavirus, otherwise known as COVID-19. While we expect additional guidance from the state today for schools and residential programs like ours, we want you to know we are taking many additional precautions to protect our staff and students.

We have instituted additional cleanings at the residences, the school, our vans and all areas our staff and students may encounter daily.

We will be limiting visitors to the program including IEP meetings, parent clinics, etc. and before you come into our buildings or before we come into your homes, we will be asking a series of questions to you. We ask for your honesty as you answer the questions.

- Have you traveled outside of the country?
- Have you or someone you had close personal contact with participated in the Biogen meeting in Boston?
- Have you or someone in your household been exposed to the virus?
- Have you or someone in your household been told to self-quarantine?

We are asking our staff to take all recommended precautions including but not limited to:

- Continue good personal hygiene
- Avoid any large gatherings including conferences
- Avoid travel

NECC is working with the Town Board of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), The Massachusetts Department of Education (DESE) and we are implementing the recommended DPH and CDC guidelines. For the most up to date information please visit the following websites:

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

DPH: <http://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus>

The safety of our students and staff are our highest priority. If families have any questions, please reach out to The Office of Enrollment and Family Support at 508-481-1015 x 3292 or EnrollmentFamilySupport@necc.org.



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