

April 1, 2020

Dear Green Chimneys Families,

As everyone adjusts to life with social distancing and quarantine, Green Chimneys is modifying our practices to align with federal and state recommendations, while continuing to meet the needs of our youth and families as best we can. One such adjustment is the increased need to minimize the risk of exposure for our children and staff on campus through reducing the number of people coming onto campus.

We have therefore made necessary changes to our visitation policy. Effective immediately, all visitation between families with their youth currently on our campus, will take place remotely (i.e. phone, Facetime, Zoom, Skype). No face-to-face visiting, including home visits, may occur until Green Chimneys School reopens.

As the number of confirmed cases continues to rise in our area, we continue to encourage families to take and keep your children at home. We understand that for some of you this has proven impossible. Should you have no choice but to consider a return to the campus, please keep the following in mind:

- You must first discuss with your child's therapist, and then with a campus administrator, to exercise any and all other options. Do not bring your child to campus before talking with your child's therapist.
- Once options are exhausted, your child will be required to submit to a screening by phone to occur less than 24 hours prior to your child's planned return. Should your child have COVID-19 symptoms, fever, or possible exposure, they will be prohibited from returning to campus.
- Once you arrive on campus, your child will have an in-person screening with a Health Center nurse. Should your child have a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, they will be prohibited from returning to campus.
- Once your child is returned to campus, they will be kept separate from the current youth on campus, for at least a 1 week period of time. No face-to-face visits will be able to occur until Green Chimneys School reopens.
- For any youth on the Green Chimneys campus, families may decide to take them home at any time. Once they are taken home, they may not return for the duration of our school closure.

We understand that these are very trying times for everyone, and most especially for our families with special needs youth at home. We know you are all doing the best you can to keep things going and your family safe in what is likely an extremely stressful environment. For those of you with children on our campus, we will be doing what we can to continue to facilitate as much contact between you and your child as possible. Below are just a few of those ways:



- You may call your child any day and at any time. Residential Life staff will provide you with your child's daily schedule so that you can choose the times they are most available.
- Virtual visits: We have devices for the youth to use to Facetime/Zoom/Skype with you, at least 3 days per week. You may arrange days/times for those with the Residential Life staff working in the dorm.
- Family sessions: Your child's therapist works one day weekly in the office and can facilitate family therapy sessions via Zoom. You can schedule those with your child's therapist directly.
- Care packages: We encourage you to send mail or packages with non-perishable items to let your child know you are thinking of them. We will be collecting mail on a weekly basis (Tuesdays), so there may be a short delay before they get them. We will also take precautions with opening them in order to keep exposure risk low.

Our goal through all of this is to keep your child safe on our campus. We realize that none of this will take the place of quality face-to-face time, and hope it can make this temporary separation a little more bearable. Let us know if you have any ideas of your own to help support your relationship with your child and your child's with you and your family.

As always, our support services continue to be available to you. Please feel free to reach out to your social worker for any needs you may have. In addition, we will make sure that you have access to your child's psychiatric provider – simply contact the Health Center or the Residential Administrator on call and they will make sure that your provider is contacted to return your call.

With these, and so many of our services, now being provided via web and phone-based platforms, we felt it relevant to also attach a notice of Green Chimneys' "Communication Modalities." This way, you can be aware of the risk and benefits of communicating via various platforms, and make decisions about what you feel is right for you and your child.

We sincerely appreciate your patience and collaboration as we all navigate through this challenging time. We are here to support you. If you have any additional concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at 914-357-1334 or [eplacke@greenchimneys.org](mailto:eplacke@greenchimneys.org), Lauren Bennett, Deputy Director, at 914-414-3007 or [lbennett@greenchimneys.org](mailto:lbennett@greenchimneys.org), Steve Klee, Associate Executive Director – Clinical and Medical Services at 845-216-5361 or [sklee@greenchimneys.org](mailto:sklee@greenchimneys.org), Kristin Licardi, Director of Social Services a 845-260-3676 or [klicardi@greenchimneys.org](mailto:klicardi@greenchimneys.org) or Sharon Gilchrest, Director of Residential Life at 845-519-5601 or [sgilchrest@greenchimneys.org](mailto:sgilchrest@greenchimneys.org).

Stay safe and well,

*Ed Placke*

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