September 11, 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2020-21 program year! We are very happy to have seasonal staff back to work and to have resumed services remotely beginning the week of August 24 for all our accepted students.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be active in our state and world, we are cautiously moving forward with classroom services with health and safety measures that include:

- reduced class sizes
- reduced hours of service
- daily health screenings upon arrival
- frequent handwashing
- encouragement of mask or face shield wearing
- supporting social distancing
- routine/frequent cleaning/sanitizing
- limiting classroom entrance to teaching staff and students only
- new drop off/pick up procedures
- continued remote services for some students

Our decisions have been made after thoughtful input from our August parent phone surveys, a parent meeting on August 10, Policy Council meetings, our BSSD partner, teaching and management staff, NSHC professionals, and Kawerak Administration.

Beginning on September 28, if COVID-19 risks are low in your community, classroom services will begin for our 4 year old and IEP Head Start and our Early Head Start students only. We will offer classroom services 2 or 4 days a week for your child depending on how many parents wish to have their child attend classroom services. Head Start sessions will be limited to 6 students and Early Head Start sessions to 4 students so staff and students together can learn how to operate safely and establish routines with COVID-19. During this time, remote services will continue for all enrolled students that are not attending in our classrooms. Teaching staff will provide information regarding your child’s services and schedule by 9/18/20.

By October 9 we will share an update on if we can safely expand our classroom services to more accepted children, more hours, etc. beginning the week of October 12.

We understand that you may wish to keep your child home from classroom services until the risk associated with the pandemic is over. We will be able to keep your child enrolled this year whether you opt for the remote or
classroom services. Your child will not lose their slot in our program if you opt for remote services all year long. You will still receive the support and benefit of the program with home learning packets, meals, formula, diapers, wipes, teacher support and any technological support we offer our enrolled students. We strongly encourage you to consider this option as we do expect that even if we do open, we will go through phases of closures based on each communities’ COVID status and staffing.

Meal services are expected to begin for all students on September 28. Classroom students will receive their meals in the classroom and meals will be available for pick up for our students receiving remote services.

Our classroom hours will be as follows from September 28 – October 9:
- 9am-1:30pm – Brevig Mission, Elim, Golovin, Koyuk, Saint Michael, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Teller, White Mountain
- 10am-2:30pm – Gambell
- 8am-12:30pm – Nome

We are in the process of setting up each family with a student iPad and up to 6 months of Kawerak paid internet to support student learning. Katie Miller and Colleen Adams are addressing all the details associated with student iPads and home internet and will have agreement forms available for you to complete next week to get your child set up and going.

In order to prepare you and your child for classroom services, we will be offering a parent orientation by teleconference on:
    Wednesday, September 23 at 3:30pm
    1-866-830-9434
    Access Code 1483994
We will share our COVID Policies and Procedures and explain drop off/pick up plans, mask wearing expectations, how we will handle every day and potential COVID illnesses, what we will do when a student tests positive, etc. We hope to answer any questions you may have and we will listen to understand any concerns you may have.

We sure wish it was safe to offer our normal classroom services and look forward to the day we can. In the meantime, we are pleased to be able to slowly begin that process as long as risks remain low. We do not know if normal classroom services will occur this program year for all students but we are taking the first steps in that direction. We will all need to go into this year with flexibility and patience while we all determine how to proceed safely and as new situations come up and adjustments need to be made.

We look forward to serving you this year!

Sincerely,
Deborah L. Trowbridge
Head Start Director