

The Woodland **WORD**

THE NEWSLETTER FOR AND ABOUT WOODLAND DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER

2021-22 School Year • Fall Issue 1
September, 2021

From Principal Natalie Adair
2021-22 school year

What a fun field day it was!



Woodland School Office Hours and Contact information:

Office Hours: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday - Thursday

8:00 am - 3:30 pm - Friday

Woodland Main Office Phone Number: 810-455-1011

Dean Transportation Phone Number: 810-364-7757



Woodland Developmental Center is operated by the St. Clair County Regional Educational Service Agency

Join us in the fun and dress up for Spirit Week!
Spirit Week September 13, 2021 - September 17, 2021

“Cruising into the 2021-2022 School Year”

Monday, September 13, 2021 - Set Sail Day - “Dress as a tacky tourist”

Tuesday, September 14, 2021 - Tropical Tuesday - “Wear your favorite Hawaiian Outfit”

Wednesday, September 15, 2021 - Disney Cruise Day - “Dress as your favorite disney character”

Thursday, September 16, 2021 - Throwback Thursday - “Dress in your favorite decades attire” - Decades Day

Friday, September 17, 2021 - Travel Home - “Wear your comfy cozy clothes/PJ’s”

Parent Representatives Needed for Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The parent advisory committee of St. Clair County, is a group of parents of students with disabilities who come together for the purpose of representing individual school districts within St. Clair County. As parents of the advisory committee, they stay informed of the current county plan changes and current trends in special education within the county and state. Parents connect and support each other, encourage empowerment, and provide opportunities to educate through sharing innovative and creative ideas. Parents serve as a resource and assist other parents in understanding special education rules and regulations, the IEP process and procedural safeguards. PAC meetings are held monthly on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm. If you are interested in becoming one of the advisory parents for Woodland, please contact Natalie Adair, principal. Parents are also encouraged to attend the monthly meeting without becoming the school representative. Any questions please feel free to contact Natalie Adair, principal (810-455-1011).

In The Event of a School Closure

School closures are announced on the Remind System, news media sources (exp. Channel 4, WPHM 1380), and on our Woodland Facebook page. If you are not registered with the Remind system, please call the office and Michelle Beeler will assist you in getting signed up for the Remind system (810) 455-1011. In addition, we will be using school messenger for future school closure announcements, more details will be forthcoming.

Contacting Woodland and Reporting an Absence

If you have general questions please call the school office directly at (810) 455-1011. For questions regarding bus transportation or to report an absence concerning transportation, call the transportation department at (810) 364-7757. If your child is not transported to school via bus transportation please report the student absence by calling the school office.

Parent Mentors Available

If you are a new Woodland parent or a parent just wanting more information or guidance, we would be happy to connect you with a “parent mentor” who can help answer your questions and share their experiences and knowledge with you. Please call principal Natalie Adair at (810) 455-1011 for further information.

Look for Woodland News on our Facebook Page



Woodland is on social media! If you haven’t already, please search for “Woodland Developmental Center” on Facebook and like our page. We post pictures, reminders, notifications, and share other important information

on this page. We would love it if you would “like” and “share” our posts so more people in our community can see how truly amazing our students and staff are. Many Woodland items are also posted on the “St. Clair County RESA” Facebook page, so please look for that, too!



Transportation Updates:

Transportation bus routes have been updated and rerouted for the 2021 - 2022 school year. These revisions occur annually due to changes in student enrollment and population. Bus routes are created for students to be transported from home (daycare/group home) to school and school to home (daycare/group home) based on the closest, safest, shortest run possible for each student. If you have any questions regarding your approximate pick-up or drop-off time please contact transportation at (810) 364-7757.

COVID-19 Updates:

For the 2021-2022 school year, our students and staff safety and well-being continue to be a primary concern. We continue to follow the approved Michigan Return to Learn Roadmap and revisions within our Extended Continuity of Learning Plan at Woodland. The full Extended Continuity of Learning Plan was sent home in July, 2021 in the Welcome Packet that came home on the first day of school. Here is the plan again for your convenience.

Guidance for 2021-22 School Year

Updated: Addendum to Extended Continuity of Learning Plan (ECOL)

Woodland Developmental Center - July, 2021, Reviewed September, 2021 - No Changes made

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year St. Clair County Regional Education Service Agency developed an Extended Continuity of Learning Plan (ECOL) in conjunction with the Return to Learn Roadmap which provided us with a guide in which we could safely open schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have functioned under those guidelines and will continue to throughout the 2020-2021 school year at Woodland Developmental Center.

As we prepare for the coming of the 2021-2022 school year we are optimistic that we will be able to revise and loosen some of the restrictions and practices that we have been under. These adjusted amendments to the plan have been determined in collaboration with the St. Clair County Health Department, Emergency Management Department and St. Clair County Administration.

On Tuesday, September 7, 2021 we will continue with the 2021-22 school year at Woodland Developmental Center. At that time we will continue our full face to face model of instruction. A review of this plan occurred at the beginning of September, and no additional changes were made to address any changes in guidance from the state. If you have questions or concerns regarding this please contact the building administrators.

We continue to ask staff and families to monitor themselves for illness and to not come to school when your child or yourself are not feeling well. (See attached symptoms). In the event that a staff member or student begins to develop symptoms during the day, with consent, we will Rapid Screen at the building. If a student tests positive they will be required to isolate for at least 10 days or until symptoms have decreased whichever comes later.

Any staff or students with close exposure to COVID-19 who have been vaccinated and are two weeks past the last shot will not be required to quarantine. Those who have not been fully vaccinated will be required to quarantine for 10 days. The number of days could fluctuate depending on the guidance from the health department.

Transportation

We will continue with the same guidelines when addressing transportation on buses and in our school vans. There has been no change in the CDC and MDHHS guidance. All passengers will be expected to wear a face covering when riding and entering the bus along with using hand sanitizer. If your child is unable to wear a face covering we will require medical documentation; if we do not already have the information on file. If your child is physically unable to put on or remove a mask they will not be required to wear a mask. All cleaning protocols will be maintained as it was in the 2020-21 school year.

For parents that are transporting to the school, please call the office before entering the building at (810) 455-1011. A secretary will review a quick health screener with you then please walk your child to the vestibule at the north door main entrance. A staff member from the room will meet you in the vestibule and will proceed with the transition into the building for the student.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at WDC

We are anticipating some changes to masking in schools and other places of employment. At this time following consultation with the Health Department all staff, and students, who are medically able, will continue to mask when indoors at WDC.

Staff will **only** be required to wear PPE, (gowns, gloves), as part of normal medical and safety protocols when addressing the potential exchange of bodily fluids and feeding.

Staff and students who have received the vaccine are encouraged to share their medical documentation when available to the school nurse so that we are ready to start the 2021-22 school year under the new PPE guidance and are able to address quarantine procedures appropriately.

PPE requirements are subject to change based on guidance from the CDC, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, St. Clair County Health Department and State of Michigan orders. In the event of a change we will send you written notice to ensure consistent communication and procedures at Woodland.

Cleaning

All cleaning protocols identified in the Return to Learn Roadmap will continue at the building. This will include the use of the UV light in the room after school hours and during the day when an individual exits the school due to illness. We will continue to wipe down high frequency areas of the building including bathrooms, handles, desks, faucets and other common areas.

Lunch Service

We will continue to serve meals within the classrooms as a daily occurrence. We will start to bring two to three classrooms to the cafeteria at a time to increase socialization. Students will cohort group/6ft apart and all cleaning protocols will be followed.

Cooking activities will resume at Woodland. Social distancing, hand washing, face masking and gloves will be required. This will occur at our Living Learning Classroom and within the transition classrooms in the building.

Specials Classes

All specials classes including Gym, Art, Music, Swim and the Daily Living Skills (Living Learning Center) will return to their regularly scheduled classrooms. Classrooms will be cleaned after each class. Masking will not be required while in the pool but will be required on the pool deck and in the locker rooms.

Recess

We will begin to follow CDC requirements that allow students totaling 6 classrooms with a maximum of 100 students to be outside on the playground without masks. This will allow us to have 1 classroom outside at a time in our courtyard area. Students may be out for a walk, in the garden or on other areas of the grounds. Staff will be required to mask when addressing individual student needs on the playground that requires close contact.

Hallways

We will continue to focus on the flow of students and staff in one direction in the building. This will allow us to continue to work on 6 ft. of distance with students and staff. In addition to our regularly scheduled movement breaks, we will start to allow movement throughout the building related to self regulation and IEP goals.

Community Based Instruction

We will continue to limit Community Based Instruction to smaller groups of students. The focus of our trips will be to address IEP goals related to the transition needs that our students may have. Students will be required to follow all transportation guidelines related to masking and social distancing. Students will be required to follow all safety protocols identified by the visitation site. Consent will be obtained prior to a student participating off site.

We will be evaluating our Vocational Exploration Sites. In order to address the needs of our students and the different work sites, we will determine the criteria needed to participate with our community partners. This information will include safety and COVID restrictions at each site. Consent will be obtained prior to a student participating in a site visit.

Field Trips

At this time there will be a continued pause in field trips, we will be reviewing this as more guidance becomes available.

Visitors to Building

At this time we will be continuing to limit visitors to the building. Please continue to phone the office and ring at the door to pick up your child. We will be holding meetings in person and virtually as indicated by the family. We will look for opportunities to socially distance and invite families in for different activities, throughout the year as restrictions change we will make adjustments.

In the event that you are interested in sending in treats for a special occasion, please make sure that those items are sealed and individually wrapped.

Please be aware that we will continue to work with the St. Clair County Health Department to assist in guiding us on potential changes to our plan. This may include a return to more increased restrictions based on the impact of the COVID-19 virus in our county or a reduction of restrictions. All changes will be communicated out to our staff and families as soon as possible.

10 tips for a “Close to” Perfect Environment for your ASD Child

1. Calming background music: Through extensive research at AIMS Global with adults and children on the spectrum, we've realized the importance of a relaxed atmosphere in the home. We understand it's not always possible to have gentle background music playing, but we've seen the difference it can make. Not all music works for all children, of course, and some children might not want any music playing. It's important to try various sounds and keep track of your child's mood and affinity towards a specific type or genre of music.
2. Pleasant smells: I also believe this is universally true—if something smells nice, it makes you smile. Our children don't enjoy overpowering smells, so instead try out some pure essential oils. Oils like lavender or chamomile promote relaxation, and peppermint or cedar wood increase focus and attention. This is also an excellent time to work on mindfulness activities. Play games with your child, like trying to guess what you're smelling to bring his/her attention to the present moment and to encourage awareness of his/her surroundings and sensory input within these environments.
3. Visual schedules: I cannot stress the importance of visual schedules enough; use them at home to plan your child's entire day. It can start with a simple “first _____, then _____” visual and move to a weekly planner later. The reason I recommend including a daily schedule is it teaches your child about organizing, planning, and prioritizing, which are all important concepts to work on. It also helps to calm your child down during any transition—from going from one activity to the next or from one environment to another. If there's only one thing you remember from this article, let it be a visual schedule.
4. Visual choice boards: this is another excellent strategy to decrease possible challenging behaviors and increase functional communication. I would usually advise our parents to have various visual choice boards throughout the house—one for the kitchen to request snacks, one in the sensory room to request specific input, and one where all your child's toys are kept. We do not require our children to follow up with a verbal request if they look at the picture of the activity or item they require. It should really be an easy way for your child to quickly request what they want and then get it.
5. Low arousal tone: I totally understand this one is easier said than done, but trust me—it makes an enormous impact on the entire home if you can keep your tone of voice calmer than usual when your child is exhibiting any anxiety (or similar emotions). The more hyper they become, the more relaxed you should (try to) be and sound. It will immediately help your child to start the process of calming his/her sensory system if there's a constant feeling of someone he/she trusts being calm around him/her. Even though we have children who will laugh or run when they are “acting out”, we usually recognize many of these behaviors as anxiety levels increasing and thus, it is important to show your child you are in control of your feelings and emotions and “there” for your child.
6. Transition cues: Another important strategy to remember and be consistent with is to remind your child when a change is inevitable. This change can be merely going from one activity to another, such as interrupting a game to have a snack break. Make sure your child has time to process the upcoming change as this will provide him/her time to prepare. Although it might be second nature for us to manage sudden changes, we have to remember that a change of activity brings about a change of sensory input, the emotions that go along with this and leaving a potential preferred activity or special interest. You can include your “first, then” schedule before a transition as well as a timer (if your child does not become anxious with a “countdown” of sorts).
7. Visual clutter: Just like most people, your child will also function and act calmer if there are areas in your home that are clear of visual clutter. We usually suggest having specific “corners” for play activities and other

areas that are specific for having a snack or lunch. There should not be too many visual distractions, such as random posters on the walls (of course, having your child's favorite characters in their room is a must). A great resource is to look at various Montessori classroom strategies and designs.

8. Chill space: I remember when I was a child, I asked my mom if I could go "camping". She would then create a camping experience by pulling up a tent and placing all the pillows we had in the house into it. I absolutely loved going "camping" as I felt safe and calm in my special space. We ask our parents to create a "chill space" for all our children. It should have some of their sensory toys that they love and soft blankets or pillows. It is a time and space for them to feel completely relaxed, with no expectations placed on them and yes, they are allowed to engage in self-stimulatory behaviors when they are in their "chill space". Try it, I think your child (and you) will love this idea.

9. Movement breaks: According to the research we did, we realized that we all need movement breaks throughout the day to sustain our attention (and interest). I suggest parents provide fun movement activities to their children every 15-20 minutes. This might seem like it is a lot of movement, but it can be as simple as a quick massage you give your child or a "let's roll in the blanket to the garden" when they have been sitting for a while. It makes it even more special if you can join in the activities, which usually leads to a "brain break" for you and your child.

10. Sincere social praise: The emphasis here really is on "sincere". I've trained in various forms of therapy through the years, but one thing is for sure, I've learned that providing over-the-top "GOOD JOB" with a cookie as a reward for certain behaviors can do more harm than good. Our children are excellent judges of characters and they know when they are being "reinforced" in an unnatural way. I strongly believe in sincere, natural praise that will truly show your child you are proud of him or her. Some of our children love loud cheering, but I would suggest providing a variety of praises—this also includes at times not placing "demands" on them every single hour. They are, after all, children, who love to have fun and "chill".

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