**Sample Provider Letter to School**

### To whom it may concern,

XXX is a child with complex health needs managed in my clinic. We suggest that their school implement the following guidance to facilitate a safe and health-promoting school environment for children with complex health needs.

It is important to note that this child is at higher risk of a severe or complicated case of respiratory illnesses such as influenza and COVID-19 due to their underlying health condition, including [relevant information here]. We and their parent(s)/guardian(s) agree that if they are in a school environment that prioritizes the considerations described below, the benefits of in person school attendance outweigh the risks. In addition, they should not attend school if they have any signs or symptoms of a respiratory illness such as COVID-19 [or *include additional relevant information here*]. Their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be alerted as soon as possible if there are any illness outbreaks in the school so that they can reassess the risk/benefit balance of in person school attendance.

* Promote respiratory illness awareness by communicating with families when flu, strep throat, COVID-19, and other communicable illnesses are circulating in classrooms.
* Encourage all school staff who work in close proximity with children with complex health needs to be vaccinated against influenza, COVID-19, and other respiratory illnesses.
* Support masking as a strategy to protect children with complex health needs from respiratory illnesses:
	1. When students or staff are exhibiting symptoms of illness
	2. Based on public health guidelines and CDC recommendations
	3. When individuals make this personal choice for themselves or their family
* Ensure masks are available for all people entering school buildings.
* Educate school staff and families about infection prevention and the increased health risks of respiratory illnesses for children with complex health needs.
* Discuss respiratory illness mitigation strategies and contingency plans for children with complex health needs in Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 plan meetings.
	1. Contingency plans should be documented in the program summary of the IEP.
	2. For each special education service documented as part of a contingency plan in a student’s IEP, clearly document the frequency, duration, amount, and location of each IEP service as well as a clear description of when and under what circumstances the contingency plan will go into effect.
* Ensure that each child with complex health needs has their own medical equipment or single use disposable equipment at school.
* Have at least one designated and qualified staff available to address acute respiratory illness symptoms and questions. School health personnel should collaborate with public health department staff to plan and provide counseling on mitigation strategies and contingency planning within the school.
	1. Use the school nurse or designated school health staff in the planning, preparation, and implementation of respiratory illness-related care to meet the student's healthcare needs. This person can serve as the bridge between families, providers, and school staff.
	2. Consult and communicate with the school nurse to ensure the student's IHP/emergency action plan provides an awareness, guidance/plan, and support/interventions in the event of respiratory illnesses
* Encourage schools, families, and health providers to create partnerships that help keep children with complex health needs healthy at school. This could include securing authorizations for medical and school personnel to discuss specific children's health needs.

In addition to the considerations above, we recommend that schools should also follow safe in-person school guidance outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics.

Please feel free to contact our clinic directly with any questions,

Signature here