

SPCNS COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan

Introduction

We, at SPCNS, have formulated a cautious but optimistic plan for reopening for the 2020-2021 school year. The following plan outlines the implementations we feel necessary to meet and exceed the guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the PA Office of Childhood Development and Early Learning (OCDEL). The following protocols also reflect the requirements of the Allegheny Department of Health. Along with the Shadyside Presbyterian Church (SPC) leadership, we are committed to creating an environment that reduces the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining a safe, secure and caring environment for children, families and staff. Equally important is our intention to provide a high-quality early childhood program where learning through play, nurturing relationships and building community are highly valued.

This document will enhance our ability as a school community to properly prepare for the adaptations needed during this pandemic. As public health guidance has changed rapidly during the pandemic and will continue to do so, we will closely monitor current conditions and respond rapidly, fluctuating between more and less restrictive protocols. We are mindful that if there are cases of COVID-19 in our community, there is no strategy that can entirely eliminate all risk of transmission. If public health guidance or the SPC mandates require the building to be closed, our program will be suspended for the safety and well-being of all involved.

Program Operation

We will offer morning programs only for 3- and 4-year-old children. We will not provide classes for 2-year-olds or any extended day options at this time. Beginning with these limits allows us all to adjust to new procedures and assure intensified cleaning and disinfecting of the classrooms. We will continue to evaluate operations and will add extended day options or more classrooms in the future, if possible.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

We anticipate that after many months at home, separation may be difficult for some children. We also know that each child has continued to grow and develop. Please know that we are your partners in supporting their adjustment. Prior to the start of school, a teacher will contact you to learn about your child, listen to your concerns and answer questions as we prepare to welcome them.

In order to minimize the number of people in the building, parents and caregivers will not be permitted to enter the building for drop-off and pick up. **During these times, adults must wear a face mask and remain six feet apart from SPCNS staff members and other adults. Children will also be required to wear a face mask at this time and throughout their time at SPCNS (see section below).**

- Families will be given a specific drop-off time and location. Staggered arrival will limit exposure. We encourage the same parent/caregiver to do as much of the drop-off and pick-up as possible. If a surrogate is needed, we suggest that you choose an adult who is not at high risk of Covid-19 complications.

- When you arrive, a staff member will meet you and your child at your designated location.
- Families will be asked pre-screening questions daily. The exact screening questions and exclusion criteria will be based on the current recommendations from medical experts.
- Your child will be given a quick health check by a staff member. The visual check will be looking for shortness of breath, cough, flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, and extreme fussiness. A no contact temperature check will also be performed. Any child with a fever of or greater than 100.4 degrees F or who exhibits any of the above symptoms will not be able to attend school that day.
- When the health check is completed, children will have the opportunity to say good-bye, and your child will be escorted to their classroom to wash their hands with soap and water before starting their day. You will not be able to share information directly with your child's teacher at this time; please email your child's teacher or call Mrs. Lang prior to class.
- Families will be given a specific time for pick up. The location will remain the same as the drop-off location. Your child will be brought to you by a staff member, ready to go home.
- Staff will not be able to share information with you at the end of the day. They will contact you regularly by email or by phone.

Personal Belongings

- If your child requires any lifesaving medication be on hand during school such as epi-pens, inhalers, etc. please bring a labeled set that can be kept at school.
- Backpacks and toys from home are not permitted.
- Because young children spend much of their day playing on the floor, staff and children are asked to provide a pair of "school shoes" that will stay at school for indoor use. We encourage slip-on or Velcro shoes that are easy to put on and take off.

Social Distancing

- Children will remain in self-contained classrooms with physical distance maintained between classes. Groups of children will not mix on the playground or in the Parish Hall. Movement through designated halls will be staggered.
- Crowding in the classroom will be avoided by limiting the number of children at a table or in a play area of the room at one time.
- No events that require gathering (such as school wide celebrations) will be scheduled.
- Volunteers and visitors will not be scheduled during school hours.
- Therapists providing outside services to children will be permitted in the building once the classroom program is running smoothly. They will need to pass the health screening and maintain social distancing. We strongly encourage families to schedule therapy sessions virtually from home.

Classroom Procedures

- All staff will be required to undergo daily health screenings and temperature checks.
- All staff are required to wear a cloth mask at all times. Disposable masks will be available as needed. Masks should be laundered daily.

- Staff will wear smocks over their clothing, and these will be laundered daily. This will allow for holding or comforting crying, sad or anxious children and protect them from bodily secretions or excretions.
- Interaction is an important part of a child's social and emotional development. We will not discourage children from playing with one another, but we will monitor and limit the amount of physical contact or closeness.
- Proper ventilation of the classrooms is vital to mitigating the transmission of Covid-19. Classroom windows will be open to bring in fresh air whenever classes are in session.
- Outdoor play is strongly encouraged, and we will take children outside as much as possible. Only one class at a time may use the playground. It will be disinfected between uses.
- Children will have individual labeled bins for markers, crayons, scissors, glue sticks, play dough, etc. Books and other paper-based materials are not considered high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfecting.
- Mouthed/contaminated toys will immediately be placed out of reach and cleaned and disinfected before returning to the play areas. Toys will not be shared among classrooms until they have been properly cleaned and disinfected.
- Classroom materials that cannot be disinfected or washed will be removed from the play space. Toys such as manipulatives, vehicles, miniature life figures, housekeeping props, etc. will be run through the Church's commercial dishwasher daily. All other toys and materials will be disinfected by hand.
- Water fountains will be shut off.
- Parents will provide drink and snack for their own child every school day. Tables will be spaced out when children are eating, and teachers will wear gloves while helping children with their snack.

Masks/Face Coverings for Children

- Since July 3, 2020 an order by the State of PA requires children over two years to wear a face covering in public, even outdoors if unable to consistently maintain a social distance of at least six feet.
- **Official exceptions include:**
 - Children under two years of age.
 - If a parent, guardian, or responsible person (such as a teacher) is unable to place a face covering on the child's face, they should not do so
 - Children who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition, including those with respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition, or disability
 - Individuals who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- If a child is visibly upset, struggling, or unable to wear a mask properly, we will not force them to do so. Our focus will be on making sure that we can successfully teach them how to properly wear a mask and see that they are comfortable and not negatively affected by it. We will focus on teaching this new skill in much the same way we encourage trying new foods or using the potty. This will be approached in a fun and learning manner that supports children's development and well-being.

Revised January 20, 2021

- Please send two cloth masks labeled with your child's full name. We encourage you to practice using the mask before the start of school.

Hand Washing/Hygiene

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to stop the spread of illness.

- Children will wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds upon arrival, before and after eating, after playing outdoors, after using the bathroom, and whenever hands are visibly dirty.
- If hands are not visibly dirty and soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used. Staff will supervise the use of hand sanitizer.
- Teachers will wear gloves when serving food and assisting in the bathroom. They will be changed between use, and hands will be washed.
- In addition, staff will wash hands before and after coming in contact with bodily fluid, or handling garbage.
- Children will be guided to cough and sneeze into their elbow or a tissue, and to refrain from touching their eyes, nose and mouth and mask.

Child Health and Immunization Records

- An updated Child Health Report will be required by the start of the school year, including immunization records.
- SPCNS requires that all students have all immunizations, including an annual influenza vaccine as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Sick Policy

Please do not bring a sick child to school. Families are asked to keep children at home if anyone in the family is experiencing symptoms. We need to be extra cautious during this time and work together to keep all staff and children healthy. **One parent or guardian must be available by phone or text 100% of their child's school day.**

- Children and staff will not be permitted in the building with a fever of or over 100.4 degrees F and/or if they have any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, difficulty breathing, fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting rash or extreme fussiness.
- If symptoms emerge during the school day, the child will be taken to an isolation area with a staff person and kept comfortable until picked up. We ask that you come within one hour to take them home. **Please have a plan in place prior to our reopening as to how you will manage to honor the 60-minute time frame.**
- The isolation area will be immediately disinfected after your child is picked up. The staff member assisting the child will change clothes and mask before returning to the classroom.
- Children or staff who have a fever of 100.4 degrees F or above with no other symptoms may return to school when they are fever free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medication.
- Children or staff with a fever of 100.4 degrees F or above and are experiencing any of the other COVID-19 related symptoms may return to school when they are 72 hours fever and symptom-free without the use of fever reducing medication. In this case, we ask that you consult your doctor to determine whether COVID-19 testing is recommended.

- Other illnesses such as pink eye, hand foot and mouth, asthma, etc., will be handled on a case by case basis.

Confirmed Positive Coronavirus

If a child or staff member has a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 we will take the following steps:

- If a staff member, preschool child or preschool family member comes in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they are required to notify the director. They will be asked to quarantine for 14 days and consult with their healthcare provider.
- A confirmed positive case of COVID-19 will immediately be reported to the Allegheny County Health Department and OCDEL to ensure all necessary measures are taken. A physician's note will be required to return.
- Families and staff will be notified while respecting the individual's right to privacy.
- We will have an immediate closure of the preschool for at least 3 business days to properly clean and disinfect the area. It is recommended waiting 24 hours before cleaning to allow respiratory droplets to settle before cleaning and disinfecting.
- All areas including classrooms, bathrooms, offices, and common areas will be properly cleaned and disinfected daily.
- **CDC and state and local protocols change as more is learned about the coronavirus. We will modify our practices if needed as updated information becomes available (See points under "Communication" below)**

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

An enhanced cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting schedule in compliance with CDC guidelines will be followed. Teachers and sextons will help with cleaning procedures.

- High touch hard surfaces such as countertops door handles, light switches, table tops, etc. will be disinfected throughout the day.
- Additional disinfecting of hard surfaces such as bathroom fixtures will be done immediately after use.
- The playground structures and equipment will only be used if it is able to be cleaned and disinfected between classroom uses. Otherwise, usage schedules will build in time for virus to become between classes. The outdoor sand pits will not be used.
- Any used drinking cups and some toys will be washed in our commercial dishwasher. Toys that cannot be sanitized will not be used.

Communication

- Communication with families continues to be essential to our program. During this time of reduced in-person contact we ask that you communicate directly to the intended staff through email or text app. All teachers have an SPCNS email address (firstname.lastname@shadysideschool.org), which will be given to each family. If time sensitive information needs to be shared, please email Mrs. Lang at mlang@shadysideschool.org, and Mrs. Lang will pass the information along.

Revised January 20, 2021

- If your child will be absent, please email prior to arrival to inform us. We will be asking a few screening questions if the absence is because of illness.
- Families are strongly encouraged to make careful choices with regard to both limiting the numbers of people outside of their households with whom they interact outside of SPCNS and to committing to following all public health guidance when they do interact with people outside of their household.
- Families are asked to adhere to current guidelines for self-quarantines if any of their members is exposed to someone who is known to have tested positive for Covid.
- Families are asked to adhere to current guidelines and keep children home from SPCNS as per any PA Dept. of Health guidelines regarding travels outside of PA.
- Teachers will continue to send program updates of activities including photos of the children exploring and creating throughout the day.

A Final Note

We remain committed to providing a warm and relaxed environment where we will continue to follow best practices in early childhood education while ensuring the health and safety of your children and our staff at this unprecedented time. We will do everything possible to support the emotional needs of each child and provide them with a sense of predictability and security. Above all, we want the preschool experience to be positive and fun!