

Main Square Day Care Centre Pandemic Policy (Plan)

Purpose

It is the goal of Main Square Day Care Centre to provide support and services to families and children in an environment that is as safe and healthy as possible. We will make every effort to continue to operate our services and protect employees and clients/families from emergency situations including pandemics.

In the event of a pandemic our goal is to remain as available as possible until authorities dictate otherwise.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Main Square Day Care Centre to mitigate and prepare for the potential impacts of a pandemic from reduced services to potential closures.

What is a Pandemic?

A pandemic is a global event. A flu pandemic starts with a new strain of a virus to which people have little or no immunity. To be considered a pandemic, the new virus must be able to spread easily from person to person and cause illness in many of the people who are infected. When it spreads around the world, it is called a pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) sets the pandemic alert level globally. The pandemic level is set based on the spread of the virus, not the severity of the illness.

Policy

Main Square Day Care Centre is required to follow guidelines set out by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Ontario Ministry of Health, and the Regional Public Health/Medical Officer of Health for proper infection prevention. Our responsibility is to ensure infection prevention practices are carried out properly to prevent the spread of illness among employees, placement students, children, and volunteers. Policies and procedures are assessed and monitored to ensure our employees, placement students, and volunteers are consistently and carefully carrying them out.

Main Square Day Care Centre will ensure our pandemic plan and service continuity/interruption plans align with the (municipal/regional plans).

Impact Planning

Main Square Day Care Centre will review the plan for the following:

- Sudden increase in employee and child absenteeism
- Maintaining staffing ratios
- Interruption of supplies and services (food, paper product, cleaning products)

- Regular program services and supplies scaled back or not available (transportation, field trips, etc.)
- Maintenance/cleaning services reduced or cancelled
- Administration activities are changed, reduced, or cancelled
- Cross training additional employees to ensure organizational stability in case the Director is unable to be in charge
- Reduction of outside supports (consultants, Children's Services, etc.)
- Temporarily laying off employees
- Potential closure (short term and long term)
- Financial loss due to decreased revenue, funding, and increased or additional costs
- Potential changes or additional duties for employees
- Spread of the infection within the centre and within the community
- Communication of the plan with employees, families/clients, funders, and community
- Re-opening of the organization after a shutdown
- Occupational health and safety implications

Infection Prevention

Main Square Day Care Centre will take all steps required to ensure a safe and healthy environment in all our programs including:

- Early identification of ill employees and children
- Isolating children who become ill during the program until they are picked up
- Sending employees home should they become ill during the day
- Sending children home if they have been exposed to an identified contagion
- Sending staff home if they have been exposed to an identified contagion
- Following all governmental/public health recommendations related to removing staff, children, and parents from the program if they have been exposed to a potential health risk.
- Requiring an employee, placement student, or volunteer who has been placed in quarantine or has a contagious illness to acquire a fit for duty or medical clearance before they return to the organization.
- Requiring an employee, placement student or volunteer has travelled or been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk to follow government guidelines regarding self-isolation.
- Requiring employees to sign a declaration stating they have not travelled during a pandemic or have been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk or travel advisory

Emergency Communication

The Director oversees implementing the organization's emergency communication plan.

Internal communication to all employees, families/clients will be by email and posted on the Main Square Day Care Centre website.

Information will be specific to the nature of the situation:

- Safety and well-being of everyone at the centres/programs
- Reduction of services and programs
- Changes in delivery of services and programs
- Shutdown of the organization
- Refund/no refund policy to be shared with clients
- Status updates
- Evacuation plan/location
- Reopening of the organization

External communication the municipal, regional, licensing bodies, and the community (possibly media) will be by the Director.

Authority to Shutdown the Organization

Main Square Day Care Centre will follow all directions and recommendations from public health officials and the Provincial/Federal Government should be declared.

The Public Health Act and The Emergency Measures Act authorize all levels of government to order a shutdown of services during a pandemic.

Procedures

Main Square Day Care Centre will proactively develop a contact list of alternatives to provide supports and services to the organization.

- Supply staffing
- To deliver additional supplies (cleaning, program, personal etc.)
- To deliver food
- To provide cleaning services
- To authorize funds to acquire emergency supplies

If a pandemic is declared and the organization remains open:

- Secure staffing to maintain ratios and safety utilizing all available part time, supply, or an outside agency staff
- Ensure additional staff are available to provide relief where required
- Modify shifts where required
- Identify which programs can be modified to accommodate possible increased or decreased needs
- Consult emergency health and safety supply checklist
- Secure additional cleaning supplies, routine-care supplies, and program supplies
- Ensure extra personal protection supplies are available
- Ensure food service/delivery is secure
- Secure/access reserve funding for additional expenses

- Ensure families/clients are informed as per the organization's communication plan
- Ensure any other reporting requirements (licensing, municipal, etc.) are done

If the organization is ordered to close:

- If the centre is open all parents will be contacted immediately by email or phone to pick up their children
- Provide a letter or send out an email with specific details including refund/no refund policy
- Ensure families/clients who are absent are informed
- Inform the required regulatory bodies
- Inform all employees who are not present
- Initiate emergency closure plan
- Ensure all confidential information, records, and files are secured and locked
- Implement business continuity plan

Pandemic Business Continuity Plan

Pandemics will have an impact on the business continuity of the organization and may not be evident immediately however it is important to have a plan to deal with the financial losses due to decreased revenues and increased or additional costs.

It is important for Main Square Day Care Centre to continue to manage basic functions should the organization face reduced operations or complete closure. The purpose of developing a business continuity plan is to identify critical areas that require immediate decisions to reduce/minimize the financial risk to the organization to ensure Main Square Day Care Centre will be able to carry on operations in the event of a disaster or pandemic.

The Board of Directors should decide who will be responsible for making decisions during a pandemic.

The following areas will require decisions to be made in the best interest of the organization and its families/clients based on the length of limited services or complete closure.

- Operating Costs
- Payroll obligations (short-term)
- Temporary Layoffs (refer to Extended Closure/Layoff Policy)
- Depending on the financial circumstances of the organization at the time a mandatory closure is declared, the organization will have to assess whether it is economically feasible to continue paying staff for a limited period of time prior to laying them off.
- Possibility of employee's working from home (completing documentation, program plans)
- Receiving grants and subsidies
- Collecting fees
- Payment of rent
- Payment of utilities (phone, internet, hydro, etc.)
- Payment of suppliers and services (food, cleaning etc.)

Preparing for Possible Shutdown

In the case of a mandatory shutdown an off-site office will be set up by the Director with the log-in and password to access information from the cloud along with a hardcopy of the data on (laptop, hard drive back-up discs).

A binder and an electronic file of essential services and contacts is ready to be taken off-site and includes:

- Written instructions on how to access essential services
- How to set up remote access to the organization's computer, emails, website, phone system
- Contact information for the Board Members, Licensing Advisor
- Contact information, account numbers, and passwords for Financial/Banking Institution
- Contact information and policy for the Insurance Company
- Contact information for the Accountant, Bookkeeper, Lawyer
- Ensuring continued access to payroll, finances, and accounting systems
- Current list of families/clients
- Current list of employees
- Current list of suppliers, services, and service agreements
- Keys, key fob, and passwords
- Any additional documents/records that are vital to the continuing functions of the organization

Securing Records and Back-Up of All Information

- Ensure all records, documents, and computer files are backed-up both to the cloud and to a hard drive
- Keep a back-up copy of the computer's operating system, and critical software off-site
- Ensure all filing cabinets are locked
- Ensure the office is locked down
- Ensure the facilities are locked down

Communication and Monitoring

Main Square Day Care Centre will establish the following system to communicate with employees and with clients/families.

The organization will provide timely updates regarding the status of the closure by email and on our website.

Main Square Day Care Centre will monitor information and updates from the local Officers of Health, and the Provincial Government.

Recovery

Main Square Day Care Centre will follow the directions of the Government, Public Health, and the school boards regarding reopening the centre(s) once the shutdown has been lifted.

The Board of Directors and the Director will meet regarding establishing priorities and assess what needs to be done to restore the premises, resume services and programs that were interrupted or affected by the pandemic.

Organizations should review their Return to Work/Recall Policies as programs and services may not return to their previous format and should consider:

- Possible changes in staffing ratios
- Clients/parents who do not return
- Changes in enrolment patterns
- Increase or reduction in space requirements
- Additional costs in requiring new personal protection equipment or sanitizing information
- Developing policies and procedures (change in routines, drop off/pick up of children, physical distancing, sick policies) outlined by local Public Health
- Reviewing policies and procedures to reflect new requirements under the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Labour

The Board and the Director will ensure all updated policies are in place including the Human Resource Manual, the Employee Handbook, and the Parent Handbook.

Under the Health and Safety Act the obligation to provide a safe and healthy work environment includes:

- Ensuring the premises have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before reopening the centre(s)
- The Director will confirm with the Board/Owner once the premises are ready to be opened
- Ensure critical supplies (cleaning products, disposable gloves, face masks, etc.) are restocked to protect staff and children
- Recall employees to review policies around changes in routines, cleaning protocols, ill children, and sick leave policy for staff
- Have employees read and sign return to work declaration stating they have not traveled during a pandemic nor have they been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk or have a travel advisory

Best Practices

Expect that employees might be anxious regarding returning to work. It is important to take the time to discuss their concerns and the steps that have been put in place or additional steps to be included before the families/clients return to the organization.

Families/Clients Returning to the Organization

- Send out a letter via email, welcoming families/clients and thanking them for their understanding during a very difficult and challenging time.
- The invitation to return should include specific details regarding start dates and what has changed
- Reassure families/clients regarding new practices that will be put in place regarding how suspected illnesses will be handled
- Review updated policies in the Parent Handbook
- Have families/clients read and sign a return declaration stating they have not traveled during a pandemic or have been in contact with someone who has travelled to areas deemed a health risk or have a travel advisory

Review

- Track lessons reviewed
- What worked
- What did not work
- Update plan

Pandemic emergency response focuses on the safety and protection of life, assets, and the environment. Business continuity focuses on continuing the operations of the business until it can return to normal. Disaster Recovery Plan focuses on Information Technology (IT) and data recovery.