

The Children's Center



Pandemic Handbook

2020-2021

(Last Update February 8, 2021)

This handbook is to help guide us in an emergency pandemic. The content herein is very fluid and will be adjusted based on new information, actual community spread, and the emergency needs of the Center. This handbook was written to help guide families and staff with open communication. The Children's Center administration will update this handbook as needed based on State and Federal guidelines. We will follow all rules, regulations, and requirements as well as recommendations of the local, state, and federal government for the health and safety of our children, families, and staff. We are a Licensed Plus Center and Emergency Child Care Program that takes the current public health crisis seriously and will always choose best practices over those that will result in a more positive economic outcome.

Be Safe. Be Well.

Dropping off and Picking up Children

Ideally, the same parent or designated guardian will drop off and pick up their child(ren) every day. Parents/guardians will be limited in entering the building beyond the front lobby during “Stay at Home” high risk periods. Parents/guardians will not be allowed into the classrooms until further notice (but may be able to drop or pick up at the classroom door if health screening and temperature checking occurs). Nursing mothers will be able to breast feed their baby in an isolated room separate from their child’s classroom.

All childcare providers, office staff, and persons entering the building must wear a cloth face covering, or mask over their nose and mouth at all times. Parents/guardians should also wear a mask when interacting with staff outside and picking up their child(ren) from the back playground when weather permits.

If parents need to speak with the director or office team, they are to enter through the front door with a mask or face covering, have their temperature checked, and use hand sanitizer. We ask that no parent touch anything during this time other than the tablet to sign their child(ren) in or out if needed. Pens will not be shared. We ask that when in the building, parents respect the personal space of staff by aiming to stand at least 6 feet away while in the lobby or hallway. We ask that families “stage” or wait outside if they see that the lobby is occupied by a family coming in and being screened.

When children arrive at school, and prior to being escorted to their classroom, they will also be screened each day. Questions regarding health and travel will now be answered daily on the ProCare app. Temperatures of both parent and child will be screened by the Orion Pre-Entry Temperature Reader starting in December. Children may be brought by their teacher or staff member to their classroom if we are in a “high risk” period. Once in the classroom, the child will wash their hands and arms before beginning to play.

Communication with staff should be done via *ProcareConnect* messaging, email, or phone to support social distancing recommendations. Teachers miss the direct face to face contact, and we are committed to ensuring family engagement is still strong. We will make sure teachers are available to keep all families updated and to answer/ address all the needs of the children in our care. We also ask that you check your notifications regularly (including on the weekends) regarding dismissal plans and/or for potential classroom or Center closures.

Mask Wearing

We understand there are personal opinions and choice related to wearing masks. Given that both the CDC and DHHS highly recommend their use, the Center’s policy during a pandemic is that all adults must wear a mask while in the building, and outside if they are within 6 feet of another adult or child. Additional recommendations can be found at: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/covid-mask-guidance.pdf>

Beginning September 14, 2020, masks will also be required for all preschool and school age children ages 3-13. This change aligns with the American Academy of Pediatrics back to school recommendation and all area school districts, who are mandating face masks as part of their reopening plans. Because our Preschool Special Needs program includes placement of children from the GWRSD, we are required to

have children wear a face covering while our inclusive preschool program is in session, and while special needs children are receiving services.

On December 19, 2020, the Child Care “Safer at Home” guidelines from the state were updated stating that children two years of age and older should wear face masks “at all times.” The guidelines went on to include, “Providers should work with children 2 years of age and older to help them understand the importance of face masks and gain compliance of use while within the childcare facility.” While we will not require face mask wearing for children ages 2-3, we will work on mask wearing with children approaching three years old so that they are ready to wear face masks when they transition to our preschool program where they are required.

Face Shields worn alone are not allowed as a substitute for a mask, as the shield may protect the wearer but does not necessarily protect the people surrounding the wearer from the wearer’s droplets. Staff members are encouraged to and may wear face shields as an additional layer of protection.

Children’s Supplies

Children should arrive in clean clothing and bring any items needed for the day, preferably in a disposable shopping bag. Some clothing items (like fresh changes of underwear, socks, shorts) may be kept at the Center for the week, and older children may bring these in their backpacks, which will be kept separated in the classroom. As needed, personal items will be sent home at the end of the week for proper washing. This may include nap time items, or other items that may need proper cleaning (please remember to wash the backpack too!). Personal water bottles are allowed at this time. Please make sure all your child’s items are clearly labeled. Children’s cubbies, bins, or hanging hook areas will be sanitized each Friday.

Until further notice, children will not share school supplies and will have their own set of crayons, scissors, play dough, pencils, etc. that will be provided by the Center.

Illness Policy and Monitoring

Children and all staff will have their temperatures checked daily before entering the classrooms. (Staff members, please see the “Staff Checklist” - Addendum A - attached for questions to ask prior to leaving your house to come to work.) Children’s temperatures will be taken at the door upon arriving then randomly throughout the day. Any student with a fever of more than 100.4 (38.0 C) must remain out of school for 72 hours after the fever has broken without fever reducing medications. *During a pandemic, we will not allow a doctor’s note for returning before the 72 hours unless otherwise noted.*

Any child showing any concerning signs of respiratory issues: excessive coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc., will be sent home and may not return for 7 days plus 3 additional healthy days *unless the child tests negative for COVID-19, and a doctor’s note is provided.*

NH DPHS and DHHS (for child care) requires that children or staff with any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19; this includes even mild symptoms, such as a runny nose,** be excluded from school and child care. These individuals are asked to “self-isolate” and be tested for COVID-19. Children and staff can return when either of the following criteria are met:

- Person has received an approved COVID-19 test that is negative, AND the person’s symptoms are improving and is fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. Approved tests include a PCR-based molecular test or a Quidel Sofia Antigen FIA test that is conducted within 5 days of symptom onset.
- Person has met criteria for discontinuation of isolation if they test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19 and do not undergo testing. These persons will be excluded from the Center for a minimum of 10 days after onset of symptoms. (Person must be fever free at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications and all other symptoms are improving).

**If a child has a chronic health condition, such as a frequently runny nose from seasonal allergies, the parent or guardian must provide documentation from their child’s healthcare provider describing the health condition and typical symptoms. Child with a chronic allergy condition where their nose runs frequently will not be excluded from the program, if the symptoms do not exceed what is considered “typical” for their condition.

Children who are found to have fever, rash, conjunctivitis, swelling in their hands or feet, vomiting and diarrhea with stomach pain++ OR present with a fever, cough, or runny nose (these are the top three symptoms of COVID-19 with children 0-4 years) will need to be seen by a medical professional. For fever, cough, and runny nose, a doctor’s note will not be accepted for the child’s return unless the child has an appropriate negative COVID-19 test (PCR or antigen test), and the test was conducted within an appropriate time frame. Even with a negative test, the child must be fever-free for 24 hours with other symptoms improving.

++The above-mentioned symptoms come with the newly identified illness that children affected with MIS-C are presenting. This syndrome is believed to be related to COVID-19. For more information, please see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>

Parents will be required to contact the Center within 24 hours of seeing their medical provider to inform administration regarding the illness and diagnosis, if any.

If your child has an appropriate negative COVID-19 test and a doctor clears your child to attend childcare sooner because they are only experiencing a viral cold, the medical professional MUST in writing state:

“ _____ (Child’s name) was seen on _____ (date) and was evaluated for _____ and diagnosed with _____. The child was tested and does NOT have COVID-19 and is able to return to childcare without placing another child or adult at risk.”

During these uncertain times, we must understand what the child’s diagnosis is and why the child was coughing, vomiting, etc. We appreciate you proactively partnering with your primary provider and us regarding your child’s health. (If needed, see 10.20.2020 Letter from DPHS to Primary Care Providers for more details).

If anyone in the home has a confirmed positive COVID-19 test, or the enrolled child was in direct contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, the parent/guardian of the child must inform the director as soon as possible by calling 569-1027 or emailing at tcox@thechildrenscenternh.org. The child will be required to stay home (and self-quarantine) for 14 days and will not be able to “test out” of quarantine because it can take up to 14 days from an exposure for someone to develop COVID-19.

Keeping Healthy

The Children's Center will take every precaution for your child and our staff to stay healthy! When we received our ECCP designation, staff were all required to complete training from NH DHHS titled *COVID-19 Public Health for Child Care Community*. Staff training and communications regarding health and safety measures remain ongoing. Consistent hand washing, disinfecting, and cleaning of the center will be performed many times during the day by the staff and again several nights a week and on the weekend by a professional cleaning service. Classrooms have also been designated into certain groupings or "pods" of two rooms. This helps with managing the potential spread of infections. Staffing of pods will not change unless necessary for staffing purpose.

Children will be required to wash their hands additional times during the day. At a minimum, hand washing will occur when arriving and entering the classroom, before and after meals or snacks, after outside time, after going to the bathroom, and prior to leaving for home (if the child is still inside). Hands should also be washed or sanitized before and after removing or replacing face masks. All this may cause a child's hands to become more dry or raw than normal. If needed, we ask that you use lotion on their hands nightly to help keep your child's hands from becoming overly dry or sore. We are not able to do so unless a doctor's note and prescribed lotion are provided.

Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. Children's books, like other paper-based materials, are not considered a high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection procedures. We will increase outdoor play as much as possible. Playground toys and structures will also be cleaned and disinfected regularly. No standing water tables will be allowed. Children will be encouraged to engage in activities that promote natural spacing and minimal congregating. Hand sanitizer is available on the playground. Proper hand hygiene will be required immediately following outdoor playtime.

NH's "Stay-At-Home" order expired at midnight on June 15. While reopening guidance for business and houses of worship continue to unfold, for the foreseeable future, we do ask that all families continue to practice social distancing. Children should not be going out into public where large crowds are present and physical distancing practices are not being honored. Public playgrounds and large group gatherings must be avoided for your child to be able to attend the Center. Violations in this matter will require the child to be placed on a leave of absence for a period or until the pandemic is over.

During the time of a pandemic, The Children's Center will not allow new family tours, outside volunteers, or meetings with outside persons to occur inside the building. "Drop ins" beyond the core group of families enrolled will also not be allowed. Necessary building maintenance will occur during business hours only if necessary. Service providers will be screened and be required to wear face coverings if in the building. All deliveries will be left outside at the front door or by the kitchen side door.

General Travel and Quarantine Guidance

We need your help in keeping all children and our staff healthy. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to be open and honest with us not only about any illnesses the child or family member may be experiencing, but also if any travel outside of New England is planned. As of July 22, families (and staff) do not need to report travel within NH, ME, VT, CT, MA, or RI, but all other travel must be disclosed. Personal international and domestic travel outside of the New England states is

strongly discouraged for all staff members. NH residents (or out-of-state visitors) traveling to/from areas outside of New England need to self-quarantine for the first 10 days after travel. If public transportation is used for any travel means, including within New England, self-isolation is also required. If you are a parent/guardian who must travel, you will not be able to drop off or pick up your child while you are quarantining. If we find that transparency and open communication is not the case, your child(ren) may be asked to not attend.

Exceptions to Travel Quarantine (as of 1.11.21) include: 1) Persons who are 14 days beyond their second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine, and 2) Persons who are within 90 days of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that was diagnosed by PCR or antigen testing (if a person had a previous infection that was more than 90 days prior, then they are still subject to travel quarantine).

Isolation and Closing of the Center

If a child develops symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., a cough and a fever) while at the Center, we will isolate that child until a parent or guardian can pick them up. Per the “Safer at Home” Child Care guidelines (updated 12.19.2020), any person that develops symptoms while at the childcare facility must be masked if they are over 2 years of age and “be removed from contact with others.” We ask that you immediately pick up your child and plan to follow up with your primary care provider. Any staff member developing symptoms while at work will also be sent home.

The classroom where any potential exposure of the coronavirus took place may also close for a monitoring period while waiting for test results. The NH Division of Public Health Services will provide input. Please recognize under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the Gramm-Leach Bliley Act, and the Americans with Disability Act, we are required to maintain the confidentiality of the affected person (be it a staff member or child). We ask that you respect the privacy of our Center community, and not talk to or question other parents or staff members about any suspected case.

Following COVID-19 testing, if a staff member’s or child’s test is positive, the classroom(s) affected will close for proper cleaning and sanitizing per CDC guidance. Moreover, after contact tracing is conducted by the NH Department of Public Health, the classroom and/or center may have to be closed for up to 14-days. Those in contact with the confirmed case of COVID-19 will be notified and specifically be asked to self-isolate, contact their medical provider, watch for symptoms, and possibly be tested for COVID-19. If there is a confirmed case, the Center shall contact The Bureau of Infection Disease Control (BIDC), The Bureau of Child Development and Head Start Collaboration (DHHS), and The Child Care Licensing Unit. (See Addendum C for details when a Positive Case within the TCC community is reported.)

In addition to potential closing requirements, hours of operation may change slightly for periods of time to allow for proper staffing and to maintain adequate ratios with the staff we have available. If this were to occur, families will be given at least a 72-hour notice.

Tuition Payments during a Pandemic Closing

Decision making on tuition payments will be taken on a circumstance basis depending on the specific family situation and course of the pandemic in our community. Please do not assume that if your child is not at the Center, that accounts will be credited or not charged for care as was the case in March and April 2020 as COVID-19 began to unfold. Tuition payments will be reduced during short times of

required closure, but not eliminated entirely. Per our July 28th communication regarding tuition payment requirements for August 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021:

- If your child's classroom or the Center is closed temporarily, your account will be charged 50% of your tuition rate.
- If your child's classroom or the Center is closed longer than 72 hours, you will be charged 25% tuition.

Please reference the 7.28.2020 letter to Center families that outlines additional scenarios regarding tuition requirements. The enrollment specialist and/or financial coordinator will keep all families updated on payments due. If at any time during a Center closing, or your own need to be out of work because of COVID-19 presents a financial hardship, please do not hesitate to let us know so that we can partner with your family during that time of need.

ADDENDUM A

STAFF CHECKLIST

| Prior to leaving your house to come to work ask... | Yes or No? |
|---|------------|
| In the past 14 days have you... | |
| Been in close contact with someone confirmed or being tested for COVID-19? | Y / N |
| Traveled domestically (anywhere in the country – including NH “hot spots”)? | Y / N |
| Do you have any of the following symptoms? | |
| Temperature above 100.4°F (check temperature w/ forehead thermometer) | Y / N |
| Cough | Y / N |
| Sore throat | Y / N |
| Runny nose and nasal congestion | Y / N |
| Shortness of breath | Y / N |
| Mild flu-like illness (fatigue, headache, chills, muscle aches) | Y / N |
| New loss of taste or smell | Y / N |
| Nausea or vomiting / Diarrhea | Y / N |

****If you answered “YES” to any of the above, please contact Tanya or Jana, remain at home, and follow CDC protocol for each of the symptoms. See our “Pandemic Handbook”, for more information on returning to work****

If none of the boxes are marked with a “YES”, proceed to work as normal.

Each time you enter the building, you must use the Pre-Entry Orion Scanner. Then please wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

Important reminder: You have chosen to work in Emergency Childcare. You are responsible for avoiding exposure to the COVID-19 virus to the greatest extent. You are not only responsible for your own health and your loved ones’ safety, but the health of the children and families we care for. You are responsible for exercising proper hand washing & exposure precautions along with social distancing with every activity you partake in (grocery shopping, getting gas, going to the post office, the beach etc.). Please be mindful of how your actions can affect the health of all within our center and community at large.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication!

ADDENDUM B

Sent Home Sick

DEAR PARENT/GUARDIAN,

You have been called to pick up your child today because he/she is not feeling well or is exhibiting symptoms that require further attention given NH Public Health directives during the pandemic.

Please see attached a letter from New Hampshire’s Department of Health and Human Services to Primary Care Providers that outlines the need for testing to help control the spread of the Coronavirus Disease. Feel free to share this with your child’s doctor if necessary.

We must assume symptomatic individuals have COVID-19 and must stay home for at least 10 days after the start of their symptoms. If a symptomatic child is tested within an appropriate time frame with a PCR- or antigen-based test and tests negative, then the child can return once they are without fever and other symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours.

Child’s name: _____ Date: _____
Axillary Temperature: _____ Time: _____
Symptoms: _____ Staff initials: _____

Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, the following guidelines will be used to determine when a child can return to group care after presenting with these types of symptoms:

- The child’s temperature has been below 100.4 for 72 hours after the fever has broken *without fever reducing medications*. If your child is sent home with a fever, we will NOT allow a doctor’s note for returning before the 72-hour window, unless they have been tested for COVID-19, receive a negative result, and is cleared by a medical professional.
- The child showing any concerns of respiratory issues (e.g., excessive coughing) may not return for 7 days plus 3 additional healthy days, unless the child has a negative COVID-19 test and is cleared by a medical professional.
- A child who is sent home with a new or unexplained runny nose, will need to be seen by your healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing, even if the symptoms are mild. Your child will be allowed back to the Center if they test negative, have an appropriate doctor’s note as outlined in the Pandemic Handbook, have symptoms that are improving, and are fever free.
- A child may return if it has been 72 hours since the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- A rash, if present, has subsided or has been confirmed as non-contagious by a physician.
- The signs of possible severe illness (including lethargy, difficulty breathing, wheezing) have been checked and ruled out by a physician as not being COVID-19 related.
- The child has an appropriate medical note stating he or she is no longer contagious (with other illnesses like the flu) and is feeling well enough to participate comfortably in the usual activities.
- If an antibiotic is prescribed for an illness (e.g., strep throat), the child may return 24 hours after the first dosage, or sooner with a physician’s note confirming them as non-contagious.

ADDENDUM C

PROTOCOLS FOR A POSITIVE CASE REPORTED TO THE CHILDREN'S CENTER

- When a positive case presents, we follow State protocols to directly establish direct contact individuals. Administration makes a list & then personally contacts every family/employee immediately that has been directly exposed.
- After we contact all direct contacts, we evaluate if we can staff safely and determine if we must close for 24-48 hours for cleaning and or staff planning/ reorganization.
- Direct contacts are defined as, anyone that has been in contact with a positive case for more than **10 minutes cumulatively and while also less than 6 feet during contact.**
- The 14-day quarantine period goes from the last day of contact with the positive case.
- Direct contacts should wait until at least day 5 and/or day 14 to test for Covid-19. Most cases will not test positive until at least day 5. A negative test however on day 5 does not free you from quarantine as symptoms can present up to 14 days.
- Direct contacts to Covid-19 can return to the Center after their 14-day quarantine period and not before. Though the State does not require a negative COVID-19 test to return after the 14 days if no symptoms present, The Children's Center does require at least one COVID-19 negative test result (between day 5 and 14) due to the large percentage of children who present asymptomatic. This is an added level to ensure we keep all our children and staff safe.
- If your child is a direct contact of a positive case and must fulfill the 14-day quarantine and has a sibling, the sibling can attend the Center as long as the quarantine child does not turn symptomatic or have a positive test. Asymptomatic people typically have a lower spread rate than symptomatic individuals.
- If a parent is in quarantine for a direct contact, their children can attend the Center as long as the parent does not present symptoms & does not at any time test positive. The quarantined parent cannot be the parent that brings or picks up their child from the Center.
- As outlined in the handbook, we must report every positive case to the State of NH and will receive priority because we are a "congregant setting." They will then begin contact tracing as well, gathering all individuals address & phone numbers to add to their monitoring list and will also contact you if your child is a direct contact.
- A positive case can return to the Center typically after 10 days from the first symptom onset. This is because the body is contagious during the first 10 days of their first symptoms. The State of NH gives a positive case the date eligible for return.
- A person that tests positive does not need a negative test to return to the Center after their isolation period. This is because an individual can test positive for Covid-19 up to 90 days.
- **The State determines when a positive case can be released & can return to work or school.** They provide the individual with a letter (not the primary provider).
- HIPPA confidentiality is still applicable during Covid-19. We cannot tell you who the positive individual is. We will also not tell you if it is a child or a staff member. Please be respectful of these HIPPA laws and others that bind us.
- When we go through any Covid-19 shut down protocol, we have told staff that babysitting for our families is not allowed, until we have at least 48 hours and can safely and properly clear everyone.

ADDENDUM D



Pandemic Handbook Agreement

I have read and agree to all the Center policies and guidelines as outlined in the 2020-2021 Pandemic Handbook. Understanding that the handbook may be updated as more information becomes available or new decisions are made by Center leadership, I agree to read all future version sent to me by email by Center staff. I may also access up updated handbook on the Center’s website.

Signature

Date

Covid-19 Waiver of Liability and Indemnification

With full awareness and appreciation of the risks involved, I, for myself and on behalf of my children, other family members, spouse, estate, heirs, executors, administrators, assigns, and personal representatives, hereby forever release, waive, discharge, and covenant not to sue the Wolfeboro Area Children’s Center (The Center), its board members, officers, and employees, (collectively the “Released Parties”) from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever, directly or indirectly arising out of or related to any loss, damage, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by me and/or my family related to COVID-19 while my children are enrolled at The Center during the pandemic.

I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Released Parties from and against any and all costs, expenses, damages, claims, lawsuits, judgments, losses, and/or liabilities arising either directly or indirectly from or related to any and all claims made by or against any of the Released Parties due to bodily injury, death, loss of use, monetary loss, or any other injury from or related to my association with The Center, whether caused by negligence of the Released Parties or otherwise specifically related to COVID-19.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the foregoing Waiver of Liability and Indemnification. I am sufficiently informed about the risks involved in using the services of The Center during a pandemic. I execute this document for full, adequate, and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by the same. This waiver remains in effect until the state of New Hampshire lifts all COVID-19 related mandates.

Printed name

Date

Signature

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