Emmanuel Lutheran Preschool Parent Handbook Coronavirus Addendum 2023-2024

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause illnesses from the common cold, MERS, SARS and, now, COVID-19. In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic, we will continue to adapt some of our policies and procedures for the upcoming school year. The intention of this document is to provide as much as information on our current plans, but we realize the need to be flexible given the changing nature of the pandemic. If, as the pandemic evolves, we need to change our plans, that will be communicated to families as quickly as possible.

Symptoms of Illness – We remain committed to keeping everyone as safe as possible. If your child is exhibiting symptoms of illness, or may have been exposed to Covid along with anyone else in your household, we ask that you contact us for the most up to date recommendations from Lorain County Public Health and the Ohio Department of Health. Covid symptoms may include new onset of cough or shortness of breath, fever of 100.0 or higher or chills, unexplained loss of smell or taste, sore throat, GI symptoms like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, and muscle pain, etc. We have a responsibility to all students, parents, and staff to be cautious, and appreciate you being as forthcoming as possible as we continue to be in a pandemic.

Arrival/Departure – We will have students brought in and picked up by parents or other adults this year. As children come into Emmanuel, you will be asked to have them enter one of the restrooms or classroom to wash their hands prior to signing in. At departure students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to being dismissed to parents or other approved caregivers. If the pandemic warrants us returning to arrival and departure being handled at the entry way we will do so, and families will be informed as soon as that determination is made.

Face Coverings – At this time, face coverings will not be required for students, families or staff. If that changes due to the status of the pandemic in our community or school, you will be informed. Our staff will support parent choice as much as possible if they send their child with masks. We do keep back-up disposable masks if needed, but ask that you send your child with a few extras as they often prefer their own masks. Please communicate your wishes regarding face coverings for your child on our Infectious Disease Waiver form.

Cleaning & Disinfecting – Cleaning and sanitizing of materials and high touch surfaces like hand rails, faucets, door knobs, bathrooms, classroom counters and table tops etc. will be managed by a coordinated effort from preschool and custodial staff. All cleaning and disinfecting supplies utilized will be EPA approved for disinfecting surfaces including coronavirus.

Hand Washing – Hand washing has always been an important way to keep germs at bay. We will be primarily utilizing our sinks and hand soap, but will occasionally utilize hand sanitizer if needed. Hands will be washed upon arrival, when noticeably dirty/in need of cleaning, before and after snack, after using the restroom, if faces are touched, and prior to departure.

Snack – As in the past, parents will be asked to provide snacks for their child’s class, keeping in mind any allergies. Any allergy information and enrollment numbers by class will be provided in each child’s open house folder. Preference will be for individually wrapped snacks or items of fresh fruit like bananas or clementines. Staff will be utilizing gloves at snack time as they pass out items and fill/refill water.

Combining Classes – We will return to allowing our classrooms to combine for our large muscle activities and music in big room each day, as well as for other special days and events in our classrooms. There is value in having the younger children learn from the modeling of the older children, and in the older children being able to teacher the younger students.

Outdoor Activities/Ventilation – One of the recommendations from the state is utilizing outdoor space more frequently. We have updated our walking/transportation permission slip this year to include permission to utilize the outdoor space around the church when weather permits. If weather requires sweaters or coats, we may still use the outdoor space, so please plan to send jackets with your child when necessary. When in the classroom we will have windows open and ceiling fans utilized when possible to improve ventilation.

Parent Communication/Involvement – We will return to allowing adult volunteers in our classrooms once we have settled into our classroom routines. As always, we welcome you contacting your child’s teacher with any questions, comments or concerns. Monthly newsletters will continue to be sent home, and posted on our website at [www.elc-elyria.org](http://www.elc-elyria.org) along with pictures and information shared on our Facebook page. A parent text group will be created for each class to communicate in the most effective manner as well. We will still hold parent-teacher conferences in the spring, and as needed/wanted.

When Ill/When to Return- Communication regarding symptoms of illness will remain crucial. Children and staff experiencing Covid symptoms should not be present at preschool. If symptoms begin while at preschool, students would be taken to a separate isolation room where a staff member would remain with them until they can be picked up. Staff would be relieved and a sub would replace them as soon as possible. If the preschool student or any family member is exhibiting Covid symptoms or has been a close contact to someone that has been diagnosed with Covid, the preschool director should be notified as soon as possible. Children and any family members in the household exhibiting symptoms should be tested for Covid. Return to school date will be decided in coordination with the local health department and CDC recommendations.

Distance Learning – While we hope that this will not be necessary this year, we realize that due to quarantines, local levels of the virus, local or state mandates, that we need to be prepared for this possibility. Our staff have engaged in professional development on best practices for educating young children in a pandemic – both in and outside of our classrooms. If an individual needs to be in quarantine due to exposure or a positive Covid case, we will provide a packet with educational activities for while the child will be out of school upon request. If an entire class or the school would require closure, a mixture of paper packets and virtual learning opportunities via Zoom, etc. would be utilized, if feasible.