

St. Mark's Preschool – COVID-19 Policies

During this time of COVID-19, St. Mark's Preschool will adhere to the following policies and all recommended best practices. We are a licensed-exempt program that will follow the guidelines set forth by the WA Dept. of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and the WA Dept. of Health (DOH). In addition to DCYF and DOH, Preschool will also follow all applicable guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept. (TPCHD) and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Most of the policies below are in addition to our Parent Handbook, but in the case that they differ we will defer to these special circumstance policies. We will also follow all directives in the St. Mark's Lutheran Church by The Narrows (SMLC) COVID-19 Exposure Control, Mitigation and Recovery (ECMR) Plan as approved by Church Council. It is available for viewing here: <http://www.smlutheran.org/being-church-together>. The safety of our students and our staff is our number one priority!

General Guidance and Contact Tracing

Staff will be trained in health and safety protocols including how to screen for symptoms, handwashing, maintaining physical distancing, frequent cleaning and what to do if someone develops signs of COVID-19. A record will be kept of all training. We will be monitoring student and staff attendance and absences for contract tracing purposes.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

There will be staggered drop-off and pick-up times to keep classes physical distanced. There will be a one-way traffic flow in and out of the building. All students will wash hands before entering the classroom. Hand sanitizing gel will be available near the sign-in/sign-out station and adults will be encouraged to use their own pen. We suggest having families use the same adult to drop off and pick up their child each day, if possible.

Health Screening at Entry

All adults and children that enter the building will be screened following CDC and DOH guidelines. This includes temperature check, a list of questions re: symptoms and visual signs of illness. If any of these result in signs of illness, the individual will not be admitted into the building until they are deemed healthy according to CDC and DOH guidelines.

Reducing Transmission

Per guidelines, group sizes should not total more than 22 people. All Preschool classes will be kept separate in 'pods' for lower risk of exposure and contract tracing purposes. No individual class at Preschool will exceed 14 people total, including teachers. Classes will not be combined for any reason, including weekly Preschool Chapel. All Preschool activities will take place in the lower Children's Faith Formation area of the building and our outside play areas.

Physical Distancing

We will practice physical distancing as much as possible with young children by creating space during play, circle time, table work/art and snack. Items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected will be removed, including indoor sand and water tables, stuffed/soft toys and play dough. There will be limited sharing of supplies, those that are shared will be only within designated classes and will be cleaned often.

Outside Play

All outside play will take place by class and be staggered. High-touch areas will be cleaned after each class. All students will wash hands before re-entering the classroom.

Snack Time

All snack times will take place in the Snack Room. Tables will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each group and chairs will be swapped out for clean ones after each class. Preschool will provide reusable cups that will be

washed each day in lieu of personal water bottles. Snack must be store-bought and in original packaging. Snack will be individually distributed by staff. All children and staff will wash hands before snack.

Hygiene Practices

We will be following all CDC and DOH guidelines. Hands will be washed often with soap and water. Hand sanitizer will also be readily available. All children and staff should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, dispose of tissue and wash hands. Teachers will remind students often and encourage good hygiene practices.

Cloth Face Coverings

Per the Governor's Mask Order - cloth face coverings must be worn by all staff and visitors unless they are alone at Preschool. Children in the PreK class will wear cloth face coverings when inside. Children in the 2s & 3s Class and 3s & 4s Class are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings when inside. Cloth face coverings may be removed during the designated snack time. Preschool will have extra child and adult masks on hand.

If Someone Develops Signs of COVID-19

If a student or staff member develops signs of COVID-19 (based on DOH screening guidelines) they will be separated from others in the Music Room with supervision at a safe physical distance. The individual with symptoms will wear a mask (if possible) until they leave the building. The space will be aired out, cleaned and disinfected after they leave. The individual should follow all DOH guidelines and must inform Preschool right away if they are diagnosed with COVID-19. If a student or staff member tests positive, their class should self-quarantine for 14 days in accordance with DOH guidelines. A staff member or student who had suspected signs or confirmed COVID-19 can return to Preschool when 24 hours have passed since recovery AND at least 10 days have passed since signs first showed up. If a staff member or student has been told to self-quarantine by a DOH or TPCHD contact tracer OR believes they have had close contact to someone with COVID-19, but they are not sick, they should watch their health for symptoms during the 14 days following close contact. They should not be at Preschool or in public places for 14 days. If questions should arise beyond this guidance, Preschool will defer to the most recent DOH and TPCHD recommendations.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

Staff members will be cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting throughout the day. All toys, supplies and hard surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily. All carpets will be vacuumed daily. Our HVAC system has been adjusted to allow the maximum amount of outside air to enter the program space.

Hands-On Materials and Equipment

All shared materials will be limited to those that can be easily cleaned, sanitized and disinfected. Individually or class labeled containers will be used for sensory bins, art supplies, etc.

2020-2021 Calendar and Events

The 2020-2021 school year began on Wednesday, September 16 in a remote format and will end on Thursday, June 10. We will continually monitor community infection rates and TPCHD recommendations to help guide us re: in-person learning. We anticipate returning to in-person learning on Wednesday, February 3. Once in-person learning begins, there will be no large family events until SMLC permits such gatherings. There will be no field trips at this time. Lunch Bunch and outside enrichment activities (soccer, Kindermusik, etc.) will not be offered until at this time.

COVID-19 Resources, Guidelines and Closures

The Preschool Director will regularly refer to recent guidelines and recommendations to keep all Preschool policies, the Preschool Board and SMLC leadership up-to-date on COVID-19 operating procedures. Preschool will look toward TPCHD for operational guidance, as will all schools, if community infection rates increase. Preschool will also monitor Tacoma Public Schools and potentially follow their lead for any closures during the regular school year. If there is a closure, Preschool will continue to connect with families through email, Zoom and social media.