



## **Strathcona Nursery School Covid-19 Re-Launch Plan**

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*Empowering our children to become mighty learners through play*

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## Overview

Covid-19 remains a serious health threat to our members and community and we at Strathcona Nursery School plan to take the multiple precautions necessary to mitigate this threat and safely resume preschool activities. We recognize that a return to school is not without risk, and expect cases or even outbreaks may occur.

This document has been developed to provide information to the Strathcona Nursery School membership and community partners on the health and safety measures our preschool will take to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and other respiratory illnesses prior to the start of classes and throughout the school year.

This plan is subject to change as the Covid-19 pandemic situation evolves and it will be updated appropriately. Measures we take will be based on best available information and guidance from government, specifically Alberta Health. We will strive to maintain up-to-date records, reporting and communications with our membership and community partners, including child care licensing, public health, and school board officials.

Our operational decisions regarding re-launch will be based on the following principles:

- The health, safety, and well-being of our members is the most important consideration.
- We will continue to emphasize a learn-through-play philosophy to enhance children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth and development.
- Our members and community partners will stay connected and engaged.
- We will exercise sound financial stewardship to ensure long-term sustainability of the organization.

General information on our preschool program can be found on our website at [www.strathconanurseryschool.com](http://www.strathconanurseryschool.com)

## Records, Reporting and Communication

This plan and any updates will be publicly posted and sent to all members of our cooperative and community partners including government licensing officials where required/requested prior to re-opening.

Parents/guardians and staff play a critical role in protecting themselves and our collective membership. They will receive information on Covid-19 symptoms and protective measures and the preschool's health and safety plans, policies and procedures prior to re-opening.

Covid-19 signage will be posted in highly visible locations.

The board of directors and our teachers will engage with health authorities to ensure we receive the latest information on the pandemic and related regulations and recommendations, and will keep our membership informed.

Teachers will maintain up-to-date records on student attendance. Attendance will be reported weekly to the Ministry of Children's Services and will be made available to public health officials when requested for contact-tracing purposes. A program membership list will also be actively maintained with current names and contact information to support public health requirements.

Teachers will immediately report any health and safety concerns to the board of directors.

All visitors, including parents, substitute teachers, and service providers who enter the building will be required to complete a health screen questionnaire prior to arrival, and to sign in on arrival. Teachers will review and collect completed health screens including their own, and file them in a secure classroom location for a period of two weeks to support contact tracing. These documents will be discarded appropriately thereafter.

Time will be allocated at monthly board meetings to discuss and evaluate health and safety measures.

The program will immediately report probable or confirmed Covid-19 cases to the following agencies to determine whether any additional course of action is required:

- Alberta Child Care Licensing
- Edmonton Public School Board Leasing Services/Property Management
- Alberta Occupational Health and Safety

## **Personal Protective Measures**

### **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be promoted and monitored as follows:

- Hand washing instructions and respiratory etiquette posters will be posted throughout the classroom as reminders to staff and visitors.
- All persons will be required to perform hand hygiene when entering the school and when entering and exiting the classroom.
- Students and staff will be required to wash or sanitize their hands before and after using shared equipment, and before and after eating.
- Teachers will monitor students' interactions and intervene with hygiene assistance as appropriate.
- Health Canada-approved hand sanitizer will be supplied and used according to guidelines for safety and efficacy.
- Students' activities will incorporate age-appropriate learning on these topics.
- Use of gloves will not be accepted as a substitute for hand washing or hand sanitizing.

### **Non-medical Face Masks and Shields**

Use of masks will follow guidance set forth by Alberta Health Services. Instructions on appropriate use of face masks will be provided and signage posted as reminders. Masks will be mandatory for all staff and visitors (including parents) while indoors, and are recommended at all outdoor locations where members may be unable to maintain a safe distance apart.

A non-medical disposable face mask will be provided to any staff or visitor who requires one for use on premises. Face shields will be supplied for teachers to use at their discretion.

Parents may choose to have their children come to school wearing masks; however, must realize proper wearing and handling may be challenging to maintain and thus have limited effectiveness. Teachers will educate children about masks in an age-appropriate manner.

### **Physical Distancing**

The program will incorporate physical distancing measures such as:

- Meetings and social events organized by the cooperative will be held virtually.
- Age-appropriate methods for physical distancing will be introduced (i.e., incorporated into play).

- Classroom play stations and assigned seating will be set up approximately 2 meters apart where able. Excess furniture will be removed to make more space to spread students farther apart.
- Floor markers will be used suggesting spatial positions and traffic flow.
- Contactless delivery of goods will be utilized.
- Members will be asked to distance themselves during student drop off/pick up times.
- Visitors will be asked to maintain a 2-meter distance from teachers and students.
- Virtual versus in-person classroom tours will be offered to prospective families.

## Student Drop Off and Pick Up

The program has a dedicated entrance on the north side of the school. Parents/guardians, children, staff, and visitors will be informed of the program's designated building entrance and advised not to seek entry through other locations in the school.

Parents/guardians conducting the drop off will complete the health screen questionnaire prior to arriving, and instructed not to come to school if they have answered 'yes' to any questions. In completing the daily questionnaire, parents/guardians will be asked to check children's temperatures. Teachers will collect and review the questionnaire and determine whether the child is able to enter. Admittance will be at the discretion of the teachers.

In an attempt to minimize unnecessary access and traffic in the school, parents/guardians will be asked not to enter the building at drop off/pick up, but rather to greet teachers at the designated entry and maintain physical distancing from others.

At drop off/pick up parents/guardians are asked to wear a mask when interacting with teachers and where unable to maintain appropriate distance from others on the school grounds.

Teachers will sanitize the door handles and railings of the entryway prior to student drop off and pick up times.

Parents/guardians will arrive during designated times. Early or late drop off/pick up will not be permitted unless pre-arranged with teachers.

Drop off times may be modified to avoid overlap with other programs using the shared entrance.

Parents/guardians will be asked to (as feasible) designate one parent/guardian for drop off/pick up, and to avoid bringing additional family members or others (e.g., siblings).

If a child is having difficulty separating from their parent/guardian, they are asked to step aside until teachers are finished accepting other students and in a better position to assist.

The program will ensure Covid-19 signage is posted at designated entrance reminding visitors not to enter if they have symptoms.

The teachers will have hand sanitizer and will assist and supervise each child with its use. Children's hands will be sanitized immediately upon entering.

Weather permitting, children will be picked up outdoors on the school field west of the building following the outdoor-play period of the class. During inclement weather, a similar procedure to drop off applies.

Above drop off/pick up procedures will be provided to Edmonton Public School Services Leasing Services for review prior to the start of the school year and ongoing with any changes.

## Cohorting, Class Sizes and Staffing

The risk of transmission of Covid-19 and other contagious diseases is reduced by limiting exposure to others. “Cohorting”, or grouping people into small groups that remain together, makes it easier to trace contact and limit transmission if there is an exposure.

The program has developed cohort class sessions. Each student will be registered into a specific cohort and may attend any number of days offered in that cohort. New students will be accepted into the program mid-year where cohort spots are available. Switching between cohorts mid-year will be strongly discouraged; however, individual circumstances will be considered.

Due to program size and budget, staffing options are limited. Thus, our teachers will need to work between multiple cohorts while taking all general precautions to limit exposure and transmission.

The program will endeavor to keep cohort numbers as low as possible in order to be safer, and more manageable and enjoyable. Appropriate staffing ratios will be maintained at all times per Child Care Licensing requirements. We will continue to evaluate cohort sizes and staffing with consideration to resources, budget, and safety relative to the progress of the Covid-19 situation.

## Health Screening and Testing

The program respects the Personal Information Protection Act with respect to collecting and storing personal health information. The program will collect only essential health information and will share, store, and dispose of it appropriately.

Parents/guardians must inform the program if a child has a pre-existing health condition that causes symptoms of illness that are similar to Covid-19, and these symptoms should be ruled out for Covid-19 by testing prior to the start of school and ongoing if symptoms change or worsen.

The program acknowledges that Covid-19 testing is voluntary for children and families; however, they are strongly encouraged to seek testing if they have any symptoms. Asymptomatic Covid-19 testing may be encouraged as recommended by the public health authority.

Mandatory daily health screening will be required prior to school entry for all staff, children/family members, and visitors by using the Alberta Covid-19 health-screening questionnaire. Any persons with any reported “yes” answers on the daily health screen will not be permitted to enter the school.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020 sets forth legal requirements for quarantine and isolation related to Covid-19. Per current Alberta law, anyone with suspected Covid-19 symptoms must self-isolate for a minimum period of 10 days (without a negative test) and until symptom free. Members and staff will be informed of these requirements, and advised that the program has a zero-tolerance policy for identified breaches and has an obligation to report to public health inspectors.

### Staff Illness

If a teacher becomes symptomatic during the school day, they must immediately isolate and leave the premises as soon as possible once staffing ratios permit. Parents/guardians will be called immediately to pick children up if a substitute teacher cannot be arranged. Future classes will be cancelled unless adequate staffing can be arranged. The teacher will not return to classes until they have a negative Covid-19 test **and** are symptom free. The program will prepare for the likelihood of increases in staff absenteeism to avoid cancellation of classes.

### **Children and Family Member Illness**

As is current practice under child-care licensing regulation, where staff have reason to believe a child has signs of illness, the child's parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for the immediate removal of the child from the premises. The child will be isolated in an area at least 2 meters apart from others under staff supervision until a parent/guardian arrives and is met at the designated building entrance. The child's temperature will be taken and the child will be asked and assisted with wearing a mask. All items and surfaces in contact of the child will be immediately cleaned and disinfected. The parent/guardian will be encouraged to access Alberta Health Services Covid-19 testing. The child will not be permitted to return to the program for a minimum of 10 days **and** the household is symptom free, **or** until they have a negative Covid-19 test result **and** the household is symptom free. Therefore, getting tested for Covid-19 is strongly encouraged as can expedite a child's return to class.

### **Confirmed Covid-19 Cases**

If the program is connected to a confirmed or probable case of Covid-19 we expect to be contacted by Alberta Health Services who will investigate and notify those who were in close contact and provide instruction regarding follow-up measures e.g., isolation, school closure.

### **Mental Health**

We will support the mental health of our member parents, guardians, staff and students by referring them to available mental and social support services and resources (see Resources section).

### **Visitors Policy**

Only visitors deemed essential will be permitted in the school and only as procedures established by the school and program are followed. Visits must be pre-arranged with staff. Essential service providers (e.g., maintenance, licensing and public health officers) will be permitted on premises and must adhere to visitor protocols.

Parents/guardians are permitted only as necessary and should limit their time spent and stay two meters from staff and children other than their own, and must follow established visitor protocols. Volunteer parents will not be permitted in the school at this time. Volunteer work will be performed remotely.

Visitors must complete the Alberta Covid-19 health-screening questionnaire prior to arrival and submit to staff, and must not visit if any symptoms of Covid-19 are identified. Visitors must wear a mask and use hand sanitizer upon arrival. All visitors must sign in. Visitors must maintain a safe distance from children and staff.

### **Program Activities**

Teaching staff will promote physical distancing of two meters where feasible. Where this is not feasible, emphasis will be placed on other measures such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning/sanitizing. Teaching staff will incorporate fun, age-appropriate Covid-19 related education into the children's activities.

Tape marks indicating 2 meters spacing will be utilized in certain areas of the classroom to promote distancing and indicate traffic flow. Field trips, special guests, and in-person social events will not be part of programming at this time unless conducted using electronic means (e.g., remote live-streaming).

Emphasis will be on activities that maintain physical distancing and do not involve sharing of items or require extensive cleaning/disinfecting. Materials will be single-use or washable.

Shared spaces and structures such as the playground, gymnasium, and other flex spaces will not be used for program activities. The hallway outside the classroom will be used solely for entering and exiting. Outdoor activities will be held in open spaces.

Snack times will be arranged to ensure physical distancing at tables. Parents/guardians will be responsible to provide snacks for their child in a labelled container. No sharing of food between children or staff is allowed. Activities involving food preparation will not be permitted until further notice. Children will be prompted and assisted with hand washing before and after snack time.

Parents/guardians will be required to pack a bag containing all their child's belongings that are needed for class. This bag will be stored during class time in a closed bin designated for that child and be taken home each day. Outdoor clothing will be stored in a designated area in the classroom, and only outdoor shoes/boots will remain in the hallway outside the classroom.

## **Cleaning and Sanitation**

Prior to re-opening, a complete flushing of the water system will be performed and a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the classroom will be conducted.

The program space has a washroom facility dedicated for sole use for our students. Staff will utilize a designated washroom in the school and follow protocols required by the school with respect to cleaning.

A daily/weekly cleaning checklist along with instructions will be used to support sanitation practices and compliance. Emphasis will be on frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch/shared surfaces (e.g., handles, taps, door knobs, railings, etc.) using Health Canada approved chemicals. Professional janitorial services will be increased.

Teachers will set aside/rotate, discard or clean and disinfect toys and materials used by children between cohorts and clean/disinfect high-touch surfaces and washrooms and complete other duties per cleaning checklist and instructions.

Current classroom equipment will be evaluated in an attempt to minimize the need for cleaning, and to create more open space in the classroom. Area rugs and furnishings that cannot easily be cleaned will be removed.

If funds permit, the program plans to procure a commercial dishwasher/sanitizer unit to improve efficiency and effectiveness of cleaning/sanitizing of toys and other materials.

Working remotely, an oversight committee will be formed to support implementation and ongoing evaluation of health and safety measures.

## **Non-compliance**

The board of directors will be responsible for enforcing policies and procedures of the society and will take an educational approach to enforcement. Member non-compliance with law or preschool policies may result in suspension from the program. Staff compliance to policies and procedures is a condition of employment. Non-compliance is subject to disciplinary measures.

If a member of the program is concerned about non-compliance to public health orders, they may contact Alberta Health Services health inspectors online or at 1-833-415-9179.

## Resources

- Covid-19 Information for Albertans <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus>
- Covid-19 information for businesses <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>
- Covid-19 re-launch guidance for preschools <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-for-preschools>
- Alberta Covid-19 health-screening questionnaire for preschool entry <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/edc-covid-19-screening-questionnaire-english.pdf>
- Alberta Chief Medical Officer orders <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-orders-and-legislation.aspx>
- Alberta Health Services Covid-19 Online Self-Assessment Tool to determine testing <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Personal Information Protection Act <https://www.alberta.ca/personal-information-protection-act.aspx>
- Child Care Licensing Act [https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008\\_143.pdf](https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf)
- Alberta Health Mental Health Hotline: 1-877-303-2642 or Health Link dial 811.