



Health Care Plan Illness Policy Statement: Care of “Mildly Ill” Children within COVID Exclusion Guidelines

Purpose: To clarify the definition of “Mildly Ill” children and outline adherence to COVID-specific exclusion guidelines as determined by NYS Department of Health and NYS Office of Child and Family Services. To outline procedures for return to program of children with suspected and/or confirmed communicable illnesses including COVID.

Background: As a NYS OCFS licensed program, our organization must adhere to current federal, state, and local regulations and guidance at all times. The following policy explains exclusion criteria for children from care as well as the requirements for when/how a child may return following illness and/or COVID exposure.

Documents which accompany this policy statement and are referenced are as follows:

- Illness Policy – Health Care Plan excerpt
- Symptoms of COVID-19_CDC

Guidelines for Exclusion from Program

- Children exhibiting any of the listed symptoms - no matter how mild - either in the Illness Policy or the Symptoms of COVID-19 CDC Guidance must not come to the program. These symptoms are considered to be “signs of communicable illness”.
- Children who must be sent home due to exhibiting signs of communicable illness must be picked up within 30 minutes of notification to the parents/guardians/families. If parents/guardians/families cannot be reached, the emergency contacts designated by the parents/guardians/families upon enrollment will be contacted.
- Children who must quarantine due to suspected/possible exposure to COVID must not attend the program for the full duration of the quarantine and have a protocol to meet below in order to return.

Guidelines to Return to Program Following Illness

- In addition to being symptom free as described below, a child who was out due to illness symptoms must have **AT LEAST ONE** of the following to return to the program:
 - A negative COVID test which was administered to address the child’s current illness symptoms.
 - A physicians note with an alternative diagnosis which lists and addresses each of the child’s current symptoms.
- Children must be symptom free, without the use of medication, for 24 hours in order to return.
 - To clarify, this means that a child who was ill must not have had any signs of communicable illness without the use of medication to mitigate symptoms within the past 24 hours.
 - Remember- the 24-hour countdown for returning to the program in accordance with the above does not begin until the child is symptom free without the use of medication. Should any symptoms recur, the 24-hour countdown would not resume until the child is once again free from symptoms without the use of medication.

- Likewise, if the child has taken medication, the 24-hour countdown would not begin until the medication would no longer be considered effective at mitigating symptoms as per the medication's label AND the child is symptom free
 - For example- if a medication indicates administration every 4-6 hours, the countdown for not showing symptoms could begin 6 hours after the administration of that medication IF the child continues to not show symptoms.
- Occasionally a physician may deem a child with symptoms to not have a communicable illness and so the symptoms do not pose an infection risk to others. In such instances the physician may outline conditional circumstances under which the child may return to the program with specific, mild symptoms that are not indicated to pose a risk to the health of others. The program will accept these physician's notes to return to care so long as the stipulations as outlined by the physician are currently and continue to be met.
 - If the child's health status changes, the program will no longer accept the prior physician's note for attendance in the program. This includes but is not limited to worsening of the child's already identified symptoms, addition of new illness symptoms, and/or symptoms that persist for a length of time which raises concern that additional care/evaluation may be required.
 - The program will not accept "ongoing" physician notes to be applied to other future instances of possible illness. Physician's notes for communicable illness will only apply to the designated illness and all future illness concerns would be addressed as isolated events of one another.

Guidelines to Return to Program Following Quarantine

- Children who must quarantine due to possible and/or confirmed exposure to COVID may not return until **ALL** of the following criteria are met whether or not the child has contracted COVID:
 - Child must not exhibit any illness symptoms in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the previous section.
 - A current, negative COVID test
 - Official confirmation of release from quarantine

Rights of the Program

Our program must, at all times, use its best judgment to ensure the health and safety of all children, families, and staff. While the above policies outline the typical procedures for addressing illness-related concerns, it is not meant to be exhaustive of all possible precautions and actions which may be required or taken based upon the individual circumstances of each incident or concern. Our program reserves the right to require additional documentation and exclusions in accordance with all applicable regulatory guidelines as deemed necessary and appropriate in providing for the health and safety of all those within our program.