

**July 15, 2022**

Dear Families,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a traumatic global event and still, after over two years, has prompted us to change some of our routines and policies. With vaccines and rapid test kits now readily available, we are in a far better place than we were in years past.

Navigating through the past couple of years has taught us many things. We are better when we are together. We will strive to keep schedules predictable and familiar, reassuring children that school is a place where they are safe. Communication between families and school are especially important. Transparency is key to keeping the school open. Unlike past years, this year we have much more information and many more resources readily available to help mitigate the spread of the virus. Finally, the fundamentals of learning through play have never spoken more truth. Whether outside on the playground or inside the classroom, when playing with their peers, children learn appropriate social rules of language, turn taking, self help skills, confidence in meeting their own needs and empathy for others. We have learned that social distancing does not facilitate these learning opportunities; children need to be together and we make it our top priority to keep everyone safe and to keep our school open.

The following document is an outline of how our school will meet the guidelines set out by our licensor, MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Our challenge is to reevaluate, reimagine and adapt our program to best meet the needs of our students and their families. While there are many temporary differences in our program, our philosophy has not changed. When children play, they learn.

Stay Safe and Healthy,

*Jamey*

Jamey Kupsc

Director

South Shore Community Center Nursery School

781-383-0036

# **South Shore Community Center Nursery School COVID-19 Health and Safety Changes**

**July 15, 2022**

## **Classroom Arrangement**

The classrooms have been arranged to promote physical distance and to facilitate individual play including art, math, science and reading/listening. The number of children using one activity or center will be limited to two or three children at a time.

## **Sharing materials**

To limit exposure, children will have an assigned cubby. When children are rotating through different activities teachers will monitor and remove any materials that are placed in their mouth to be cleaned and disinfected. Children's belongings will be stored in their cubby. Cubbies will be cleaned between groups. When materials are shared, children will be reminded to wash their hands after using shared items.

## **Physical distancing**

Young children are naturally social so the idea of being physically distant will be challenging for all of us at school. We need to find a balance between health and safety and the social emotional needs of developing minds. Planning, classroom set up and routines can help children limit physical interaction, but we know that 2,3,4, and 5-year-old children need reminders following rules and controlling their bodies. Children will get close to others; they will share things and they may even give a friend a hug. It is part of being human.

## **Vulnerable Children**

To ensure that we are adequately prepared to provide safe and appropriate services to children with special needs and vulnerable children we will reach out to families of high risk children and encourage them to discuss school enrollment with their healthcare provider. If they choose to send the child to school, we will devise a plan with additional, necessary protections.

## **DAILY PROTOCOLS**

### **Visitor Policy**

At this time, are able to allow visitors to enter our school. We ask that visitors who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask to protect the unvaccinated children in our school. All of our staff members are fully vaccinated. SSCNS reserves the right to screen any individual seeking admittance to our school.

### **Self-Screening**

Prior to coming to school for the day all staff, families, caregivers, children, or anyone seeking entry to the program must self-screen at home. Self-screening includes checking for fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting), fatigue combined with another symptom, headache, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, or any other symptoms that feel like a cold. Anyone with a fever of 100.0F or above or any signs of illness will not be allowed to enter the program. Do not bring your child to school if you or the child is sick. If your child has signs of illness you must keep your child home until 48 hours have passed without the use of medication or with a doctor's note. Staff must confirm self-screening

results prior to starting work daily and will not report to work if they are experiencing any of the outlined symptoms above.

### **COVID-19 Symptom Screening List**

Check for these symptoms every morning before you drop off your child and ask yourself if you or anyone in your household has come in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If any of these symptoms is present, please do not bring your child to school.

- Cough?
- Sore throat?
- Difficulty breathing?
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)?
- Abdominal pain?
- Unexplained rash?
- Fatigue?
- Headache?
- New Loss of smell/taste?
- New Muscle aches?
- Any other signs of illness?

### **Health Monitoring During the Day**

Staff will monitor children throughout the day for symptoms of any kind, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or unexplained rash. Children who appear ill or are exhibiting symptoms will be separated from the larger group and be monitored in the director's office, which is a quiet, separate space until the child can be picked up by the parent or caregiver.

### **Isolation and Discharge of Sick Children or Staff**

If a child becomes symptomatic during the school day staff will notify administration and the child will be moved to the director's office. If possible, the staff member caring for the child will cover the child's nose and mouth with a face covering or mask. The staff member that stays with the child will wear appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment) while attending the sick child. The room will have access to a separate bathroom designated for use by the sick child only. We will contact the child's parents and have the child picked up as soon as possible. If a staff member becomes symptomatic, they must cease childcare duties immediately and be removed from others until they can leave. Staff must regularly self-monitor during the day to screen for new symptoms. All staff members of the SSCCNS are required to be vaccinated.

### **Exposure or COVID-19 Positive Children or Staff**

If a child or staff member has been exposed to COVID-19, regardless of whether the individual has symptoms or not, the child or staff member will not be permitted to enter the program until they have met the exclusion protocols from the local board of health and have consulted with a health care provider. Children or staff who are COVID-19 positive or symptomatic and presumed to have COVID-19 must not return to school until they have also met the exclusion protocols from the local board of health and have consulted with a health care provider. We will follow guidance from the local board of health on quarantine for other children and staff. We will implement any additional precautions needed to ensure the program space is safe for our students and staff based on the guidance of the local board of health.

## **Medical Confidentiality**

Medical confidentiality laws restrict how much personal information we can share about the person who tests positive, including their identity.

For contact tracing purposes, the state and local health departments differentiate between "close contact" and "incidental contact". Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for longer than 15 minutes. Since our new health and safety protocols limit close contact within the program, reducing possible exposure, only some children and staff will have been in close contact with the infected person. People identified as close contacts will be contacted individually by SSCNS administration. Others (people not in close contact) will receive a group email and a notice in their child's school bag.

### **Procedure in a Positive COVID-19 Scenario at SSCNS**

- Determine the date of symptom onset for the child/staff
- Determine which days, if any, the child /staff was at the school while symptomatic or during the two days before symptoms began
- Identify people who had close contact with the infected person
- Contact families with close contacts by phone, everyone else enrolled in school will receive a general email
- The entire school will be thoroughly deep cleaned per CDC guidelines

Additionally, SSCNS will notify the following parties:

- Employees and families regarding exposure (while maintaining confidentiality). Close contacts will be notified by phone and all others will receive a general email
- The Local Board of Health
- EEC and the SSCNS licensor

If we have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the Board of Health will determine whether we need to close the school.

## **ENHANCED HYGEINE**

### **Handwashing**

Staff will monitor, model, and teach handwashing. Children will be assisted as needed with handwashing. SSCNS has handwashing sinks in each classroom.

Handwashing instructions are posted above the sinks at the child's eye level with clear visual cues.

**Hand Sanitizer** Handwashing is the preferred and safer method to clean hands but when handwashing is not available hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol will be used with parent permission. Staff will model, teach, and supervise children when using hand sanitizer to ensure children do not put hands wet with sanitizer in their mouths. Hand sanitizer will be stored securely out of the reach of children.

### **Proper handwashing procedure**

Staff must know and follow the steps needed for effective handwashing

- Use soap and warm water to wash all surfaces of hands (front, back, wrists, between fingers) for at least 20 seconds
- Make sure there is visible lather
- Rinse thoroughly
- Dry hands with a disposable towel

### **Increased Handwashing**

SSCCNS teaches, encourages, models, and reinforces correct handwashing protocols:

- Parents and caregivers should wash their own hands and children's hands before dropping off, prior to pick up and when they get home
- All individuals entering the building are required to immediately wash their hands

Staff and children must wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after:

- Entry into or exit from program space
- When coming in from outside activities
- Before and after eating
- After sneezing, blowing nose, or coughing
- After toileting and diapering
- Before handling food
- After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- After using shared equipment
- After assisting a child with handwashing
- Before and after medication administration
- After contact with face covering
- Before and after wearing gloves

### **Coughs and Sneezes**

Children, staff, and families must avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Children will be taught to use tissues to wipe their nose and to cough into their elbow and wash their hands immediately after. Staff are trained to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue then dispose of the tissue in the trash and wash their hands with soap and water.

### **Masks and Face Coverings**

#### **For Staff**

SSCCNS staff are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Current protocols do not currently require vaccinated individuals to wear masks. SSCCNS will respect staff members who choose to wear a mask for personal health reasons.

#### **For Children**

SSCC does not currently require children to wear a face mask or face covering. We will continue to follow guidance from the Cohasset Board of Health, EEC and CDC. Should there be a change in discretion, we will amend our mask wearing policy accordingly.

### **Gloves**

SSCCNS will wear disposable gloves while performing the following:

- Diapering
- Food preparation
- Administering medication or first aid
- Screening activities requiring contact
- Applying sunscreen

Handwashing or the use of hand sanitizer before and after these procedures is always required.

## **Enhanced Guidelines for Cleaning Sanitizing and Disinfecting**

Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting classrooms will be the responsibility of the teaching and janitorial staff of SSCC. Classrooms will be cleaned between sessions. SSCNS will intensify the routine cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting practices, paying extra attention to frequently touched objects and surfaces, including doorknobs, bathrooms, and sinks throughout the school day.

### **Indoor Areas**

Proper guidelines are strictly followed when cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting

- Children will be moved to another area while disinfecting agents are being used
- All cleaning products used will be EPA Approved and will be used according to the directions on the label
- All sanitizing and disinfecting solutions are used in areas with adequate ventilation
- All cleaning products will be stored in the cabinets above the counter in the kitchen area of the school
- All cleaning products are stored separately from food
- Single use paper towels are used for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting
- No sponges or cloths are used to clean
- Staff will wear gloves when cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting
- Staff will wash their hands after these procedures

### **Cleaning Areas after Potential Exposure**

If an individual at SSCNS has a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 diagnosis the CDC recommends closing off the areas visited by the ill person, opening and outside doors and windows, and using ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area, then waiting 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning staff will clean and disinfect all areas such as classrooms, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment and machines used by the infected person, focusing on frequently touched surfaces.

### **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 Pandemic is an ever-changing situation. **This document will be amended as new information and guidance is released.** Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your support!

### **Resources**

**Cohasset Board of Health** (781-383-4100 ext.5119)

Contact Mary Goodwin Public Health Nurse

**Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/departments-of-early-education-and-care>

**Center for Disease Control (CDC)** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-cdc-release-guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-spaces-where-americans-live-work-and>

## **South Shore Community Center Nursery School Health and Safety Guidelines**

### Disclaimer

The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing, rapidly developing and changing situation. South Shore Community Center Nursery School encourages all staff members and families to monitor publicly available information and follow federal, state, and local health organization guidance and government mandates. This plan demonstrates our best effort to increase safety at our school. Given the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with respect to transmission by asymptomatic carriers, we cannot guarantee an environment free from COVID-19 or any other disease or virus. Despite our best efforts in following all applicable guidance, a parent, child, family member or staff member of South Shore Community Center Nursery School may be infected, with or without their knowledge, and may be unaware that they carry a virus putting others at risk of contracting COVID-19 or any other disease.

The information provided in this supplement was obtained from a combination of publicly available sources including federal, state, and local agencies. This supplement will be updated depending on current situations and as knowledge concerning COVID-19 grows. As there is yet so much to learn about COVID-19, please be advised that South Shore Community Center Nursery School can give no assurance to the accuracy or completeness of the information provided. Further, the information contained herein is provided for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as a contract or guarantee of performance or results. South Shore Community Center Nursery School will not be held responsible if any parent, child, family member or staff member contracts COVID-19.

I have read the above disclaimer and understand the content.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_