

# Salisbury/ Riverside Childcare Covid-19 Safety Plan

This safety plan outlines policies, guidelines, and procedures that we have put in place to reduce the risk of covid-19 transmission. The below information is taken from BCCDC “

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools/child-care>”

## What is a health check?

A “health check” helps us keep track of our health and monitor if we develop of any symptoms of COVID-19.

Parents and caregivers need to check their children for COVID-19 symptoms every day before bringing their children to childcare.

Staff should learn about common COVID-19 symptoms to:

- teach older children about common symptoms so they can let staff, or their parent/caregiver know if they don't feel well
- monitor themselves daily for symptoms
- ask parents and caregivers to check their child(ren) daily for symptoms before bringing them to childcare

Childcare directors should let people who regularly attend a childcare setting (i.e., staff, parents or caregivers of children, and other adults) know that they have a responsibility to do a “health check” before attending or dropping their child off at the setting.

## Below is a table of the daily health check questions

Daily Health Check			
1. Key Symptoms of Illness	Do you have any of the following new key symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
	Breathing difficulties (breathing fast or working hard to breathe)	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
	Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Nausea and vomiting	YES	NO
2. International Travel	Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO

## What will happen if a child or staff member develops symptoms?

<i>If a Child Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness While in a Child Care Setting</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness While in a Child Care Setting</i>
<p><b>Staff must take the following steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediately separate the symptomatic child from others in a supervised area.</li> <li>2. Contact the child's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.</li> <li>3. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill child. If not possible, staff should wear a non-medical mask or face covering if available and tolerated or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.</li> <li>4. Provide the child tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.</li> <li>5. Avoid touching the child's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.</li> <li>6. Once the child is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.</li> <li>7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the child was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).</li> </ol> <p>Parents or caregivers should pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p><b>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</b></p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.</li> <li>2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.</li> <li>3. Use a tissue or non-medical mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.</li> <li>4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Children and staff should return to the child care facility according to the guidance in this document.</b></p> <p><b>A health-care provider note should not be required for children or staff to return.</b></p>	

## **Creating a safe environment**

- Outdoor spaces are ideal when weather permits; when possible, play time, snacks or meal breaks, and learning activities, will happen outdoors.
- Indoors, staff will apply basic principles of good indoor air quality, including supplying outdoor air to replenish indoor air (e.g., open windows when weather permits), and ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are working properly.
- Staff will increase ventilation by keeping bathroom fans or ceiling fans running continuously. If an air cleaner or purifier is available, it will be placed in the area where people spend the most time and direct the airflow, so it does not blow directly from one person to another. Forced air system will run as much as possible with the “FAN ON” setting.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

Regular cleaning and disinfection are important to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces

- Staff will clean and disinfect high touch surfaces at least twice a day. This includes doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, water fountains, tables, chairs, electronic devices and toys.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will happen at least once a day.
- Staff will clean toys in the childcare facility daily with soap and water and then disinfect with a store-bought product or bleach solution.
- Personal items (e.g., blankets, reusable food and drink containers) can be brought into the childcare setting from home for individual use. Parents and caregivers should label these items and wash these items at the end of the day.
- Staff will clean and disinfect cots and cribs after each use, and launder crib linens between children. If parents are providing their own linen, the linens should be laundered and placed in a sealed plastic or washable bag before bringing to the centre.

## **How do we practice physical distancing while in a childcare setting?**

The physical space requirements for licensed childcare settings, mean that childcare centres have sufficient space to support physical distancing. This means childcare centres have enough space for at least 1-2 metres between staff. There is no need to reduce the number of children in care at any one time.

At our Childcare we will create small and consistent groups of staff and children, to minimize the mixing of staff and children from different groups.

Staff should:

- Reduce prolonged face-to-face contact between other staff members and maintain physical distance where possible.
- Avoid physical contact between other staff.
- Reduce the number of different staff that interact with the same children throughout the day.
- Minimize unnecessary physical contact with children.
- Minimize the number of visiting adults that enter the centre, unless that person is providing care or supporting the inclusion of a child in care.
- Organize more activities that encourage individual play and more space between children and staff.
- Encourage everyone to spread out as much as possible within the space available.
- Encourage children to minimize physical contact with each other.

Staff caring for young children should not avoid appropriate physical contact, such as assisting children with washing their hands.

**Here are a few additional principles that we will consider**

<b>Limit the number of adults that come inside</b>	<b>Stagger breaks and arrivals</b>	<b>Spend time outdoors</b>	<b>Limit physical contact</b>
<p>Limit access to buildings for staff and children only.</p> <p>Control access to common areas like break rooms, washrooms or drop off locations</p> <p>If possible, ensure separate washrooms for staff and children.</p> <p>Pick-up and drop-off of children should occur outside the child care setting unless there is a need for the parent or caregiver to enter the setting (e.g., very young children). Remind parents to practice hand hygiene and physical distancing measures.</p>	<p>Stagger break times, snack or meal times to allow spacing of staff and children between meals</p> <p>Stagger timings of pick up and drop off.</p> <p>Ensure entrances and exits are clearly marked.</p> <p>Use multiple entrance points if available.</p>	<p>Learning activities, snack time and play should be outdoors as much as possible.</p> <p>Encourage children to spend time together outside.</p>	<p>Teach children about personal space through games and visual cues.</p> <p>Organize children into smaller groups and/or spread children out to minimize direct physical contact.</p> <p>Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children and staff</p> <p>Limit the number of different staff who interact with children throughout the day, and limit any unnecessary mixing between groups</p> <p>Increase the distance when children are napping together – try to space apart. For example, when lying down for a nap, place children head-to-toe or toe-to-toe.</p> <p>Consider placement of children when using multi-seat strollers, for example keeping children within their smaller groupings, placing children with an empty seat beside them and diagonally between rows.</p>

## **When should staff or children get assessed?**

**Children and staff should stay at home** when new symptoms of illness develop.

The key symptoms to watch for are fever, chills, cough, difficulty breathing\*, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

- If the staff or the child's parent/guardian indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they may return to daycare. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.
- If children and staff have only one of the key symptoms without fever or difficulty breathing, children and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to the childcare facility without further assessment
- If symptoms include fever or difficulty breathing, two or more of the key symptoms, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain the same or get worse, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 8-1-1, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner or going to a COVID-19 testing centre.

\*In small children, difficulty breathing can look like breathing fast or working hard to breathe. Remember, if you think your child is ill, please keep them at home.

## **Can staff/children without symptoms go to the childcare if someone in their house is sick?**

Children and staff without symptoms can still go to child care even if someone else in their household is sick. They cannot go to child care if public health has told them not to. This is the same as for other settings like workplaces and public spaces.

## **What if a child lives with someone with confirmed covid-19 ?**

Public health will provide the necessary information around a safe return to child care.

## **What to do if staff/children get sick while at home**

Staying home when sick is one of the most important ways to decrease the spread of COVID-19.

Staff and children should stay home when new symptoms of illness develop. Key symptoms to watch for are

- fever
- chills
- cough

- difficulty breathing (in small children, this can look like breathing fast or working hard to breathe)
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

Here are a few helpful rules that can be followed:

- If the staff or child is having symptoms that are common to what they usually experience with a previously diagnosed health condition (eg. allergies, asthma) they may return to the childcare facility. No note is required from a health care provider.
- If children and staff have only one of the key symptoms without fever or difficulty breathing, children and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to the childcare facility without further assessment
- If symptoms include fever or difficulty breathing, two or more of the key symptoms, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain the same or get worse, seek a health assessment by calling 8-1-1- or a primary care provider.
- Remember, if you think your child is ill, please keep them at home.
- If a COVID-19 test is recommended as a result of a health assessment, [self-isolate](#) while waiting for results.

### **Who must stay home if not sick?**

- If someone has travelled outside of Canada, they must self-isolate for 14 days upon return. Returning travellers who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during this time period should go for testing.
- If someone was told by public health or a health care provider that they are a close contact of a COVID-19 case, self-isolation is required for 14 days from the day of last contact.
- What to do when a child/staff member gets sick in the childcare
- A child will need to be separated from others and supervised, provided tissues to cover up their coughs or sneezes, and their parents or caregiver will be contacted as soon as possible and asked to pick them up. The child will continue to be cared for until their parent or caregiver can come and pick them up.
- If a staff member is sick, they will be separated and asked to go home as soon as possible.
- In both cases, the spaces they were in need to be cleaned and disinfected.

### **Will children be able to play together on the playground?**

- Playgrounds are a safe environment for children to play together. Focus more on minimizing physical contact between each other rather than staying any particular distance apart.
- All children should practice hand hygiene before and after play.
- No extra cleaning or disinfection is required for playground structures.

### **Practicing hand washing at Salisbury childcare**

- Staff will encourage hand washing often.
- Staff will promote proper and frequent handwashing through signs/pictures, role modelling and creating a routine for hand washing. All sinks should be supplied with liquid or foam soap.
- If sinks are not available, staff will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, wipe your hands with a hand wipe before using hand sanitizer. Otherwise, avoid touching your face or eating any food or beverages until hands can be washed.

### **Are masks recommended for children?**

- The COVID-19 guidelines for childcare outline recommendations for how to provide a safe setting for both staff and children. Therefore, masks are neither recommended nor necessary. However, some staff and older children may choose to wear non-medical masks. Wearing a non-medical mask in a childcare setting is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.
- Children under two years of age should NOT wear masks because there are risks of breathing problems, choking or strangulation. For young children over the age of two, masks are generally not recommended as they can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes. If an older child wants to wear a mask: show them how to do so safely and properly.
- Remind children that other children and adults have reasons for wearing or not wearing masks, so it is important to be kind and respectful to others.
- Childcare staff should monitor and address any discrimination or bullying associated with mask wearing, whether it is experienced by those who do or do not wear masks.

### **When should staff wear masks?**

- Childcare settings are implementing environmental, administrative, and personal infection prevention and control measures to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, the use of non-medical masks when just staff and children are present is not necessary.
- However, general recommendations would suggest that staff wear a mask when interacting in close proximity to parents, guardians, and any other adults doing drop-off

or pick-up. This is also advisable if staff are interacting in close proximity with other non-staff adults in the course of running a childcare centre. Mask use is not a substitute for other measures such as distancing and handwashing.

- If a child becomes ill during the course of the day both the staff caring for the child and the child (if over 2 years) should wear a mask until the child is picked up.

### **Is it safe to share food?**

- Children and staff should not share food, drinks, soothers, bottles, sippy cups, toothbrushes, facecloths, and other personal items.
- Personal items should be labelled with the child's name to discourage accidental sharing.
- If meals or snacks are provided, ensure each child has their own individual meal or snack. Reusable utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use. Any disposable utensils need to be thrown out.

### **Can parents/caregivers bring homemade food?**

- Childcare settings are not allowing homemade food items to be shared or sold at this time (e.g., birthday treats).

## **Activities**

### **How can play be done safely?**

Exercise, play, and other activities should be done outdoors when possible. Group play activities should be organized in a thoughtful way, taking into consideration physical distancing. Hand hygiene is encouraged before and after play.

### **How about sensory play involving water and sand?**

Sand and water can be used for play provided that children wash their hands before and after play. COVID-19 does not survive well on surfaces, other than hard surfaces. There is no evidence showing that the virus survives on sand, in water, or on playdough.

### **Is it okay to sing in groups?**

Speaking and singing can lead to the release of large respiratory droplets, which are the primary route of transmission for COVID-19. However, singing in groups can be a safe activity if people are able to stand 2 metres apart to reduce the spread of droplets. Consider singing outdoors or opening windows to increase ventilation. Other hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette principles should be practiced.

## **Mental health**

### **How can staff support the mental health of children?**

- COVID-19 affects more than our physical well-being. With so much happening, it's normal to feel worried and overwhelmed. Mental wellness, particularly stress, also



impacts our physical well-being and our behaviours, and can increase our risk of getting sick.

- It's important to focus on your own, as well as children and other staff members', mental well-being. Child Health BC is a provincial organization supporting children's health.

### **Shared space**

#### **Microwaves, refrigerators, photocopiers, coffee pots etc.**

- Staff can share appliances and other objects. Treat items like microwaves as high touch surfaces. Disinfect them at least twice per day. Always wash your hands before and after handling shared objects.

### **Ventilation**

Ventilation systems in good operating conditions bring fresh air indoors and help reduce and remove many different contaminants from indoor air. During COVID-19, all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in childcare settings should be checked to ensure they are working properly. Where possible and if local conditions permit, windows can also be opened to help bring in more fresh air.

### **Can staff work in more than one location?**

Childcare providers can work in more than one location. The important consideration is ensuring an adequate number of childcare providers to children, as per licensing regulations.

### **What if someone tests + for covid-19 in a childcare setting?**

Public health will determine the need to exclude any children or staff, or to temporarily close the childcare, in the event a case of COVID-19 is identified in any childcare setting.

### **How will PH respond if there is a + case in a childcare setting?**

- If a staff member or child is a confirmed (positive) case of COVID-19, public health will identify who that person has been in recent close contact with (i.e., contact tracing) to figure out how they became infected and who else might be at risk of infection.
- If it is determined that a person with COVID-19 was in a childcare setting when they may have potentially been infectious, public health will work with staff in the child care setting to understand who may have been exposed and will notify everyone considered a close contact\*.
- *Public health will determine who is a close contact. This is done by figuring out how long a person was exposed to the confirmed (positive) case and what type of interaction or contact they had.*
- To support a person's privacy, public health will only provide the information required to help with contact tracing. Staff should not notify others about potential or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the child care setting unless specifically asked to by public health. If necessary, public health will provide notification to the broader community if it is determined that not all potential close contacts can be reached directly.

### **General points/ summary**

- Workers, children, parents, and caregivers must not enter the workplace if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.
- This will be communicated to workers, parents, and caregivers.
- There is a signage at entrances reminding people not to enter the site if they have symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- At drop off, a daily “yes/no” verbal confirmation is in place to make sure that children do not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
- Staff will not accept a child drop off if the answer is yes.
- Workers with symptoms of COVID-19 must be excluded from work, stay home, and self-isolate until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious disease, and their symptoms have resolved.
- Staff will communicate to parents and caregivers the requirement for them to assess their children daily for the presence of symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease prior to drop off.
- Parents and caregivers must keep their children at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have resolved.