



St. James Lutheran Preschool COVID Reopening Plan 2021-2022



Please note that the information below is subject to change with the need to revise according to the latest COVID-19 conditions and regulations.

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St. James Lutheran Preschool is preparing to open its doors for the 2021-2022 school year on September 9, 2021. These guidelines and procedures are in compliance with CDC, NYSDOH, SORIS, and OFCS. Additionally, Dr. Rachel Bergeson, Director of Student Health Services, SBU and member of St. James Lutheran Church

St. James Lutheran Preschool's students and teaching staff, as well as families, will need to be flexible with an understanding that the priority of protecting the health of everyone may require changes in procedures, sometimes with minimal notice. Our goal is to ensure a safe and organized reopening of our preschool that ensures the health and safety of our students, their families, and our teaching staff!

Please note that these guidelines and procedures are subject to change with the need to revise according to latest COVID-19 conditions and regulations.

PPE and Hygiene:

COVID 19 Update as of August 5, 2021 from the CDC: "Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors regardless of vaccination status."

- Masks are to be worn by teachers, staff, children (ages 2+) parents, caregivers, and authorized visitors of the church/preschool building when inside the building. Mask breaks will be available during the day.
- Each classroom is considered a pod, therefore, classes will be kept separate with no comingling.
- Extra masks will be available if one becomes soiled or breaks during the day.
- Each classroom has its own Handwashing Station for frequent handwashing.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers will be located inside each entrance of the building.
- The teaching staff will continue the preschool's social manners curriculum in reminding preschoolers about the importance of hand washing hygiene, respiratory hygiene, keeping hands and feet to themselves, and keeping hands and items out of the mouth.

COVID Health Screening prior to leaving home:

- General Illness: It is the parent's responsibility to screen themselves and their child for general illness prior to leaving the home. If the child has signs of illness or has a fever (100.4 or above), please do not bring your child to school. Parents are to notify the Preschool of a child's fever. After 24 hours of being fever-free (without fever-reducing medication) the child may return to classes.
- COVID Health Screening: Each Parent/Caregiver who brings their child to school each day, will do so knowingly and honestly, that the answer to each of the below COVID questions is a "NO".

Additionally, it is the responsibility of the Parent to ensure their child's Caregiver bringing them to school can answer "NO" to each of these questions.

1. Are you currently experiencing, or recently experienced (in the last 48 hours), any new or worsening COVID-19 symptoms?
2. Have you had close contact (being within six feet for at least 10 minutes over a 24-hour period) or proximate contact in the past 10 days with any person confirmed by diagnostic test, or suspected based on symptoms, to have COVID-19?
3. Have you tested positive through a diagnostic test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days?

If any question above is answered "YES", then unfortunately, your child cannot enter the preschool.

Arrival Procedures:

- On the first day of school, there will be two stations outside the classroom door:
Station #1 - Temperature Check and COVID Health Screening. Please note: All persons who are fully vaccinated or have recently, in the last three months, fully recovered from COVID-19 are exempt from the COVID Health Screening questions, but temperature checks will still be completed on each person dropping off a child.
Station #2 - Photo Station (Child Alone, and Child with Parent)
- Once inside the classroom, Parents and Child will be directed to the Handwashing Station.

Classroom Learning in a COVID world:

- Children (ages 2 and above) are asked to wear masks that best fit their face. If your child is challenged for any reason (i.e. sensory, assertive or stubborn, etc...) by wearing a mask, that's OK! Send him/her in with his mask and we will work with your child in a loving and patient manner over the course of the next days and weeks, just as we will be working on other things such as caring and sharing. Oftentimes, a child will respond differently to a teacher's request when the parent is not present. Please know that your child will NOT be refused learning because of his/her refusal to wear a mask.
- To minimize crossover among children and teachers, classes will be scheduled so that only one class at a time will utilize the indoor and outdoor play areas and bathroom spaces.
- Teachers will model and discuss social distancing in a positive way so that children are aware of these guidelines while in a learning environment. Children will be reminded in a positive way to keep hands to themselves, no wrestling or jumping on each other, and to "open play" using our classroom's many centers for learning and playing.
- Within the classroom, activities and projects will be completed individually or in small groups.
- Play toys and learning manipulatives will be divided among each classroom and used only within that classroom's pod.
- Sanitizing toys and manipulatives are part of the preschool's cleaning regimen.
- Outdoor spaces will be utilized as often as possible for learning and playing.

Dismissal:

- Each child will have had his/her hands washed with soap and water just prior to dismissal.
- Children will be dismissed from their respective classroom door. Please dress accordingly for the weather during dismissal procedures.
- Each child shall be signed out by a parent using the clipboard provided at the entrance way.

Playground Time:

- As is the tradition, classes will take turns using the playground.
- Shared playground equipment will be sanitized before each class uses the playground.
- Handwashing with soap and water will occur after using the playground.
- In inclement weather, recess will be held inside, either in the classroom or in the Parish Hall.

Toileting:

- Children will always wash their hands with soap and water after toileting.

Lunch Bunch – TBC pending COVID conditions

If/When Lunch Bunch (for 3s and 4s) is offered this year, the following will be the procedure:

- Parents will call the Preschool Office the business day before by 3 pm to schedule their child for Lunch Bunch for the next school day. Only the Preschool Office can take Lunch Bunch sign-ups – please do not ask the teachers to sign your child up for Lunch Bunch as they do not have access to the master sign-up list.
- No child may attend Lunch Bunch the “same day”.
- Hands will be washed with soap and water before eating their lunch.
- Please pack food items in a lunch bag/box/sack that your child can easily open by him/herself – the Lunch Bunch teacher will assist as needed.
- As is the same with our Preschool Policy, Lunch Bunch does not allow the sharing of food between children and is a “nut-free zone”.
- At the end of the AM Lunch Bunch session, your child’s hands will be hand-sanitized prior to pick-up.
- At the beginning of the PM Lunch Bunch session, the Lunch Bunch teacher will take your child to the handwashing station to wash with soap and water prior to eating.

Preschool Office Business:

- Parents are always welcome in our Preschool Office to provide tuition payment and/or to inquire about any of our programs and/or policies, etc...
- Preschool Families are encouraged to use the Preschool’s red mailbox located outside the preschool office doors for any paperwork and/or tuition payments during the hours when the Preschool is not in session.

Fire Drills:

- The preschool will continue to ensure that all students are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in fire drills while in preschool.
- When the planned Fire Drill is held, the local fire station is alerted and the Drill commences.
- At the ringing of the Fire Alarm, the children are lined up and brought outside to a “safe spot”.
- When the Fire Drill has ended, the children will be brought back into the building and their hands washed with soap and water.

Essential Visitors:

- Essential visitors (SEITs, Fire Marshalls, maintenance workers) to the school will be required to wear face coverings and will be restricted in their access to our school buildings. Visitors must follow all safety protocols in this plan.
- All visitors will sign in as part of Track & Trace.

Communications between Preschool and Families:

- The Preschool strives to effectively communicate with our families in every way possible and on every platform available to share any and all child-related matters – including COVID matters! Drop-offs and Pick-Ups are, oftentimes, our families' main method in communicating with us about their child in attending school that day or beyond. We encourage this! Additionally, we welcome you to call, email or stop in at the Preschool Office to talk with us about any matter that concerns you or your child. We are here to help!
- Each teacher will strive to develop a relationship with her students' families at the beginning of the school year. You are welcome to meet with your child's teacher at a time that is convenient for both parties if there is a matter you feel should be discussed in person or over the phone. Each teacher can be reached by either work email and/or by calling the Preschool Office at 631-862-8934.
- Teachers and Preschool Office Staff will return your communication within 24 hours and/or the next business day.
- Each teacher will strive to briefly converse with you at drop-off and pick-up as time, weather and circumstances allow.
- Each teacher will never wait until the November or May Parent Teacher conference to discuss with you a matter she is concerned with about your child's development.
- Your child's totebag (for 3- and 4-year olds only) will be a consistent source of classroom information and Director information - please be sure to empty the totebag each day after school.
- In the event of a school closure, due to weather, virus outbreak, or for maintenance work, the Preschool will notify families via email, answering machine message, Channel 12 News, Walk FM, Facebook and Instagram.
- Families are encouraged to LIKE US on Facebook and FOLLOW US on Instagram at "St. James Lutheran Preschool".

Remote Learning:

- Remote learning and/or hybrid learning will not be available during the preschool year.
- Early Childhood learning is done best in person, face-to-face. If there is a virus outbreak and quarantining is required, we will provide online curriculum for your child during the quarantine time to do at home with a parent/caregiver.
- If a governing agency closes the preschool for COVID matters, we will do our best to adjust the tuition accordingly within reason to help both our families, our teachers, and our not-for-profit budget while keeping in mind that the Preschool will do its best to provide curriculum as stated above.

In the case of child getting/feeling sick/ill while in class:

- Any preschooler with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher or showing signs of Covid-19 symptoms will be sent home as soon as they are able to be picked up.

- While waiting for pick up, he/she will be brought to and supervised in the blue Nursery room.
- Teaching and Preschool Administrative Staff with symptoms of COVID will be separated from her class and an appropriate substitute will be brought in.
- All symptomatic cases will be handled as if patient were COVID-19 positive, until that diagnosis is ruled out.
- Parents must arrange for their child to be picked up in a timely manner either by the parent or by a designated person as indicated on their child's gold-colored Emergency Contact Cards.
- Once the staff or preschooler has left the isolation area, it will be ventilated, cleaned, and disinfected
- A report must be made to the Suffolk County Department of Health for any person testing positive for COVID-19 so contact tracing can occur.
- According to the CDC, the symptoms of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Fever of 100.4 or higher
 - b. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - c. A new loss of smell or taste
 - d. Cough
 - e. Fatigue
 - f. Muscle or body aches
 - g. Sore throat
 - h. Nausea or vomiting
 - i. Diarrhea
 - j. Congestion or runny nose
 - k. Headache
- The overlap of COVID-19 in students to many other illnesses makes diagnosis difficult. Any mild illnesses in children are reasons for your child to remain home.
 - As we are soon entering allergy season, and your child may have allergies and asthma which impact their breathing, it is vital that we have knowledge of their health via a note from the doctor saying that your child has asthma, etc so we do not send them home for something other than COVID-19.

Return to school following illness:

1. If not diagnosed by a healthcare provider as having COVID-19, a preschool student or staff member may only return to school if:
 - There is no fever, without the use of fever reducing medicine, and they feel well for 24 hours.
 - They have been diagnosed with another condition. A healthcare provider has given written consent for them to return to preschool.
2. If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a healthcare provider, they may not return to school and will stay home until:
 - It has been at least three days since the person has had a fever (without fever reducing medicine).
 - It has been at least ten days since the person first had symptoms.
3. The decision of whether a COVID-19 test needs to be conducted should be determined by a healthcare provider or the health department.

In Case of a Positive COVID-19 Test:

- If a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19 and was in the classroom within 48 hours of testing positive, then the student, the teacher and classmates must quarantine for 10 days.
- If a student was exposed to COVID in his/her household and was in the classroom within 48 hours of the positive test, then an email will be sent to the families in the class alerting them to this matter. Only if the child tests positive would quarantine occur for the teachers and classmates.

Contact Tracing:

- If a student, teacher and/or staff member tests positive for COVID, the school will contact the Suffolk County Health Department.

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- The preschool classroom and its facilities will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized each night, rechecked in the morning, and cleaned midday between the AM and PM sessions. Areas include classroom surfaces, bathrooms, and classroom vestibules, including doorknobs and railings.
- High-touch surfaces and high traffic areas will be cleaned throughout the day.
- PPE will be used by all persons doing any cleaning and disinfecting.

Travel Advisory:

- Preschool Staff and Families must adhere to any/all Travel Advisories throughout the school year at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.

Miscellaneous:

- At this time, field trips will be scheduled when it is safe to do so. The Preschool will inform families well in advance of any field trip that is planned.
- Parents will not be allowed in the classroom at drop-off and pick-up, however, parents/caregivers will be allowed to enter as needed for pre-authorized special reasons and events.

In Closing:

The Preschool will make every effort to address any COVID questions or concerns as they arise and to update our Preschool Teachers, Staff and Families during the school year, especially in the coming days and weeks ahead. Thank you for your support of our Preschool's Reopening Plan! The Plan looks to keep our children, families, teachers, and staff as safe as possible in a learning environment that, in turn, supports your child's overall development and growth. We look forward to a great school year with you and your child and the hopeful promises of a COVID-free world! May God continue to bless our preschool families, staff and community! And we pray for mercy and grace upon those who have been affected by COVID-19.

Glossary of Terms:

CDC – Center for Disease Control

NYSDOH – New York State Department of Health

SORIS - State Office for Religious and Independent Schools

OFCS - Office of Child and Family Services