

The Little School and  
The Yellow School at  
Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church  
11612 Memorial Drive  
Houston, Texas 77024  
(713) 490-9267

## **Handbook Addendum – Fall 2020**

### **OVERVIEW**

It is our goal to provide a safe and nurturing environment where your child can grow emotionally, socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. Our program may look slightly different as a result of COVID-19 but we are very much committed to providing a creative learning space that will stimulate and challenge your child's natural curiosity and inquiring mind.

### **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK ADDENDUM**

As the Memorial Drive Presbyterian early childhood programs prepare to re-open, those in church leadership roles have reviewed best practices in the various program areas from across the county to provide a comprehensive protocol in response to COVID-19. We have created the guidelines with consideration of both Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church Early Childhood Programs core values (including community engagement and well-being), as well as recommendations from local, state and national organizations, such as the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

### **THIS HANDBOOK ADDENDUM IS FLUID AND MAY BE UPDATED**

If guidelines from local, state, or national health officials are updated this handbook addendum will be revised to comply with the new guidelines. If and when guidelines change, we will notify you promptly and implement those changes immediately.

### **WE ALL PLAY OUR PART**

Safety is a Partnership: To maximize everyone's health and safety, it is important to create a partnership with our families and staff, understanding that everyone will play a critical role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment. We cannot do this without your committed partnership to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. We thank you for your support and patience as we work to address needs as they may arise.

## **SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19**

“The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. While the risk of serious illness or loss of life is greatest in those 65 years of age and older, persons in every age group can get COVID-19 and some will have a severe illness. We should all be thankful that, with rare exceptions, COVID-19 is not claiming the lives of our children. However, we can never forget that a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread that infection to others who may be far more vulnerable.” Courtesy Governor’s Strike Force to open Texas

These are the known symptoms of COVID-19 – as you know, some may have mild symptoms or be asymptomatic:

- o Cough
- o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- o Chills - Repeated shaking with chills
- o Muscle pain
- o Headache
- o Sore throat
- o Loss of taste or smell
- o Diarrhea
- o Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- o Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

## **METHODS OF VIRUS SPREAD**

“COVID-19 is spread from person to person through contact that is close enough to share droplets generated by coughing, sneezing, speaking, and even just breathing. COVID-19 can also be spread by touching objects where contaminated droplets have landed. Because of this easy manner of transmission, an infant, child or young person who is infected with COVID-19 can spread the infection to others they come in close contact with, such as members of their household, teachers, or other caregivers. We have learned that infected persons with mild or even no symptoms can spread COVID-19.” Courtesy - Governor’s Strike Force to Reopen Texas

## **WHO CAN SPREAD COVID-19?**

“The virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 65 or older with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured reopening of Texas.” Courtesy - Governor’s Strike Force to Reopen Texas

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR FALL 2020 EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

**HOURS OF OPERATION** - Little School and Yellow School will have modified operating hours when we reopen. Little School will be open 9:15 am - 4:00 pm Monday-Friday for a limited time. Yellow School will be open 8:45 am – 2:30 pm for a limited time. We will update you with specific dates in the upcoming weeks as to when we will resume normal business hours.

## **DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS**

To maximize everyone's health and safety, we feel it is important to create a partnership with our families, whose children will be attending our programs, and our staff, understanding that everyone will play a critical role in maintaining a safe and healthy environment.

Temperature checks: As part of this partnership, parents of children and all adults will be asked to perform temperature checks at home each day before arriving at school; anyone with a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit must remain at home.

Staff will have their temperature checked upon arrival to work and will be sent home if their temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.

Children will also have temperature checks performed by staff prior to exiting your vehicle in the morning.

Health Screening questions: Also as part of this partnership, and in accordance with CDC and state guidelines, parents of children and all adults will answer a set of health screening questions before being permitted to entering the schools.

## **WHO SHOULD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL**

As part of the health screening process, anyone with the following symptoms or exposures must remain at home:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact (within the 14 preceding days) with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

## **VISITORS**

Due to implementing the new daily health screenings, we will be not allowing any person except the following to enter into our schools:

- School staff
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Regulation staff, Department of Family and Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Children enrolled at the operation
- Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation, only when a need is present at the discretion of the director will they be able to enter the building
- Parent on-site volunteer opportunities will be put on hold until further notice
- Any adult entering our buildings will need to wear a mask, wash hands, or use hand sanitizer provided and have responded to Health Screening questions

## **TOURS**

On-site tours will not be available at the present time – future availability will be announced through the website.

## **DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES**

To minimize the amount of foot traffic into our buildings we will be modifying drop off and pick up to a traditional carpool process outside both Little School and Yellow School.

- At drop-off, teachers and/or staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness, including flushed cheeks, shortness of breath, cough, fatigue, rash, or extreme fussiness.
- Staff will check your child's temperature, utilizing a contactless thermometer.
- Teachers and /or staff will be assigned to meet cars and accompany children to their classrooms.
- If at drop off or arrival any child, staff, or visitor is found to have any symptoms listed above, they will be asked to return home and stay home until they meet the criteria to return to school after illness policy listed below.
- At drop off, we ask that parents remain in the car to help expedite the drop off process when possible.
- Infants will be carried in their car seats. The car seats will be stored outside of the classroom.
- At pick-up, parents will need to secure children in their car seats. Parents will check the infant is secure before leaving.
- Students and teachers are required to wash hands before entering the classroom.
- Parents need to notify the school if they are dropping off/picking up outside the assigned times.
- If possible, older people such as grandparents should not pick up children, because they are more at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

## **COVID-19 SICK POLICY**

As a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are modifying our normal sick policies to take special consideration in an effort to reduce the risk of possible infection. We cannot emphasize enough the need for our parents to keep children home when they are sick. We will require the following protocol to be adhered to by staff and families alike:

- Any sick children and/or staff are required to stay home.
- Children who have a temperature of 100°F or higher, or who are displaying symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, flush cheek, shortness of breath, rash, fatigue, or extreme fussiness and other childhood ailments such as vomiting, or diarrhea will be sent home.
- Children who are displaying symptoms of any illness will be placed in a supervised and comforting isolated area to help prevent the spread of the virus or infection.
- Parents must pick up a sick child within 30 minutes of being contacted.
- Any person who is confirmed to have COVID-19 within 14 days of being at the school is asked to notify the school so that appropriate precautions/facility closures can be put into place as guided by local health officials.
- Persons with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 may return to school following a 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.
- Similarly, persons with close contact to a person who has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (but without lab-confirmation) may return to school following a 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure; persons who wish to return to school prior to fulfilling these criteria must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return based on an alternative diagnosis.

- Any person who becomes ill while at school will be asked to wear a mask (if appropriate) and will be isolated until the individual can be safely dismissed home or to a healthcare facility.
- The school will close off any areas used by the person who was ill until the areas can be appropriately cleaned and disinfected as recommended by health officials.
- Close contacts of the ill individual will be notified, as feasible and as advised by local health officials. For example, if a child or staff member becomes ill, other members of the ill person's group (classroom) will be notified.
- Additional facility closures may be required depending on the perceived risk, and as advised by local health officials.
  - If a COVID-19 case is confirmed in a child, adult, or staff member, local health officials will be notified and will guide plans for contact tracing and/or facility closures.
  - Should there be a positive case in a classroom, all families in that classroom will be notified. The room will be closed for 14 days and then re-opened.
  - With the separation of the classes, there should not be a need for further classroom or school closures.

## **RETURN (AFTER ILLNESS) POLICY**

Persons who have been ill may return to school when all of the following criteria have been met:

- at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications); AND
- the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND
- at least 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Persons who wish to return to school prior to fulfilling these criteria must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or negative nucleic-acid COVID-19 test(s).

## **HANDWASHING**

All children, staff, or allowed visitors are required to wash hands upon arrival. Additional required handwashing times include:

- o Before and after preparing food and drinks, including infant bottles
- o Before and after eating or feeding children or themselves
- o Before and after administering medication or ointment
- o Staff-before and after assisting toileting/diapering
- o Children-after toileting/diapering
- o Upon reentry to the classroom from outside, and various activities such as art or sensory play

Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available.

- Teachers will supervise children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion
- Teachers will assist children with handwashing, including infants who cannot wash hands alone
- After assisting children with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands

## **INSIDE CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

While we take the medical guidelines and health protocols very seriously, we also understand the social and emotional complications that arise as a result of these new protocols. Our teachers and staff will do the best they can to meet the protocols while still creating a warm and nurturing environment for your children.

- Children's temperatures will be taken by parents before arrival and again by staff between 11:30 am and 12:00 pm before a nap.
- Children and staff will remain with the same group throughout the day when possible. All groups will be in separate classrooms.
- Class use of playgrounds continues to be a challenge. Both schools are exploring ways that we will be able to stagger classes to allow time for proper cleaning to occur in between uses and maximize social distancing.
- Where possible, nap mats will be 6 feet apart, and children will lay head-to-toe to reduce the potential for the spread of the virus.
- Activities will be modified when necessary to encourage social distancing but allowing the children the opportunity for play.
- We are exploring creative methods to be able to maintain the use of water tables and sensory tables, in compliance with the new recommendations.
- The administration team will restrict visits to rooms by standing at the doorway unless it is necessary to enter.

## **INFANT CARE CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

As with the other classes, our infant teachers will continue to provide high-quality care in a warm environment. Many of these protocols are practices that already occur in our infant rooms but will intensify in our response to COVID-19.

- Teachers will change their shirt when secretions from the child are present.
- Teachers will wash hands, neck, and anywhere touched by a child's secretions before touching another infant.
- Teachers will change the child's clothes if secretions are present.
  - Clothing is to be placed in separate bags, sealed, and sent home to be washed.
- Infant staff will wear a mask when holding and feeding.

## **ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

Both schools will continue to work to provide enrichment opportunities for the children throughout the week. To minimize exposure, these enrichment opportunities which are held weekly will now be held in each classroom and may be facilitated by the teachers or a specialist who maintains social distancing and is masked.

## **HOW WE WILL BE TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN REGARDING COVID-19**

We plan to have an upbeat outlook on maintaining health and safety and will speak with children accordingly using age-appropriate language. We will create an expectation with all children about healthy habits and safety habits and will use this language throughout the day. We will be sure to share the language and expectations with you so you can help reinforce these habits with your children at home.

## **GUIDANCE REGARDING MASKS OR CLOTH FACE COVERINGS**

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.)

- Face coverings (covering the nose and mouth) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.
- Face coverings are most essential when physical distancing (i.e. 6 feet of separation) is difficult.
- Face coverings should NOT be placed on children under the age of 2 years, or anyone who has trouble breathing or who cannot remove the face covering without assistance.
- Adults, including staff, are asked to wear a mask or face covering (over nose and mouth) when entering/exiting the facility, or when indoors and within 6 feet of another person for extended periods.
- In situations when masks or face coverings may be impractical, other efforts to reduce the risk of transmission will be maintained as outlined below.

## **CLEANING AND SANITIZING**

On most surfaces, we use a soap and water solution followed by a bleach solution when necessary. Frequently touched surfaces like door handles, faucets, telephones, light switches, and keypads will be disinfected several times a day. The teaching staff will remain vigilant about handwashing. These procedures are part of our daily routine, and we are providing additional reminders to everyone. In addition to our cleaning service increasing their cleaning and sanitizing, the following will be implemented:

- Before reopening, the church cleaning service will be doing an extensive cleaning of both buildings. Extensive cleaning will also be performed daily after school dismissal.
- Toys and equipment that are not easily disinfected will be removed from the classrooms.
- The teaching teams will create a rotation of a limited number of toys and manipulatives which will be out for the children's use a little at a time, allowing for sanitizing throughout the day.
- Toy and supplies will be sanitized on an as-needed basis. Pencils, crayons, and other supplies will be separated per child to avoid sharing.
- Staff will ensure that there is adequate ventilation for the room when using cleaning products to prevent children from inhaling fumes.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.
- All teaching and administrative staff have participated in a health and sanitation class in preparation to maximize compliance with the latest protocols.

## **PLAYGROUND AND OUTDOOR TIME**

The schools will maintain normal routine cleaning of the playgrounds in between each class that is using the equipment. High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings will be cleaned routinely as well. The use of water play and sensory tables will be limited based on class size, age, and ability to maintain social distancing recommendations. At this time there is no recommendation to limit the use of sandboxes or wooden structures.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL (REMINDERS)**

In accordance with Minimum Standard Health Protocols, we are asking that children DO NOT bring in non-essential items from homes such as toys and books. Activities like Show and Tell will resume at a later date. Items that may be brought to school include:

- Nap bedding and lovey (if needed) that are washable only
- Infants and toddlers should have multiple changes of clothing on hand, in a bag, and each item labeled with their name. We will not be able to provide a change of clothes currently.
- Active and comfortable clothing

- Tennis or other closed-toe shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Refillable water bottle
- A bag to secure all items. Everything should be labeled with your child's name on it.

## **STAFF HEALTH PROCEDURES**

The school administration has created a set of guidelines for all teachers and staff to adhere to while employed at the church. We have shared these guidelines with the staff. In response to questions that may arise, please note that any person listed below will need to go through the procedures below. The following individuals must be screened every day before entering the facility:

- Operation staff
- Persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers, HHSC Child Care Regulation staff, Department of Family and Protective Services staff
- Professionals providing services to children
- Children enrolled at the operation
- Parents who have children enrolled and present at the operation, only when a need is present and at the discretion of the director can enter the building
- Teachers will wear masks throughout the day and use other personal protective equipment to limit the spread of any illness
- Administrative and leadership staff will wear masks when going to classrooms and limit visits to the doorway unless entry to the classroom is required
- Anyone entering the facility will need to adhere to the handwashing and Daily Health Screening protocol listed above.

**Many of the afore-mentioned procedures have already been in place at our schools. The children and teachers are already very familiar with handwashing protocols, cleaning protocols, and monitoring the health of the children in our programs. Yes, we may look a little different right now (the children will not be able to see our smiles – we are practicing on smiling with our eyes). Yes, we will be cleaning even more. Yes, we will only have one class on the playground at a time. Yes, we will be doing health screenings before the children are removed from the vehicles.**

**We will exercise every caution possible, however, there is the possibility that your child will be exposed to and/or contract the disease. Should this occur, please notify me as soon as you are aware so that we may contact the necessary authorities.**

**All of these updated practices are for the health of your child, your families, and our teachers. We appreciate your partnership with us to keep everyone healthy! Welcome back!**