

Parent Handbook Addendum - Guidelines for COVID-19

SEC Child Care Guidelines for COVID-19 are approved by the Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Licensing Branch and local Public Health Units, and follow the most current recommendations provided by the Ministry of Health. SEC has trained all staff to implement the following measures that will reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious illness within the program. These guidelines are subject to change as per the direction of the Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Licensing Branch and local Public Health Units.

How You as a Parent Can Help

If your child has signs and symptoms of illness, especially a fever of 37.8 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or higher, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, keep them home.

If someone in your household has come in close contact with an individual who is suspected of having COVID-19 or has a confirmed case of COVID-19, keep your child home.

As much as possible, have the same adult drop-off and pick-up your child each day, to reduce the number of adults who come in contact with the staff. SEC considers an adult to be any responsible person generally 18 years of age or older.

Plan for drop-off and pick-up of your child to take more time than it usually does to allow for screening of illness and for staff to escort your child to and from the program.

Provide us with any changes to your contact information, emergency contacts, or your child's medical information (e.g. allergies)

Curriculum & Programming

SEC will continue supporting our philosophy that children are strong, capable and competent. Programs will promote this view of children by providing choices within the curriculum, the environment, and are encouraged to exercise autonomy and decision making throughout. (See Program Statement). Based on the current recommendations from Public Health some adjustments will be made temporarily to observe physical distancing within individual programs as required. Examples may include:

- Capacity in each room is based on Ministry of Education Licensing requirements.
- Same staff will be assigned with one group of children where possible.
- Less children at each table for play and snacks.
- Toys, equipment difficult to clean will be stored, or closely monitored (e.g. plush toys, fabrics, books).
- Craft materials will be available in individual containers for each child.

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- Sensory materials will be available in individual containers and disposed after each child's use (e.g. sand, playdough, slime).
- Where possible outdoor playtime will be increased.
- Staff will incorporate fun learning activities that teach children about physical distancing and personal hygiene.

Program Procedure Changes

Arrival and Daily Screening Process

[Daily Screen York Region Public Health](#)

Each day before arrival all parents will pre-screen their children at home. Providing your child has passed the health screen a staff member will escort your child to their room. Parents will not be permitted to enter the location. If by chance you have forgotten to pre-screen your child, staff will be able to provide you with a pre-screening tool from Public Health for you to complete prior to entry.

Each program will have a designated drop off and pick up area with appropriate Public Health signage and recommendations. To accommodate this process, restricted arrival and pick up time may be required at your program. Your program Supervisor will provide you with specific details on the process for your site.

If the parent or any of their children are experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID-19, have come in in close contact with an individual who is suspected of having COVID-19, has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or has travelled outside of Canada in the previous 14 days, they will be sent home, and not permitted to enter the centre. You will need to contact your health care provider/public health and follow their instructions on the next steps.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

SEC has implemented enhanced cleaning and disinfecting measures to help reduce the spread of infectious illness. A staff member will clean and disinfect rooms, toys and equipment when rooms are vacant (e.g. outside time, gym time, before & after program etc.). A schedule of the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting is required by Public Health. A focus is placed on high touch areas including door handles, sinks, toilets, and toys. Any toy that is difficult to clean and disinfect has been put away or will be closely monitored (i.e. plush toys, dress-up clothes, puppets). Anytime a child places a toy in their mouth, coughs or sneezes on a toy, it is taken out of rotation until it can be cleaned and disinfected.

Personal Hygiene

Staff and children follow a routine of hand washing with soap and water throughout the day. For example, we wash our hands when we arrive at the centre, after using the washroom, before and after eating, after playing outdoors, after using a tissue, and any time hands are visibly soiled. Staff schedule hand washing routines into the day and demonstrate how to wash hands and monitor children while they wash their hands.

When running water is not available, for example outdoors, children over the age of 2 years can use hand sanitizer. Staff monitor children using hand sanitizer to ensure it is applied properly.

Staff will demonstrate for children how to cough and sneeze into the arm or shoulder. Anytime a child uses a tissue they are taught to discard the tissue in a garbage bin, and to wash their hands.

As much as possible staff will remind children to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth.

Children's personal creams, lotions, and diapers should be labelled with the child's name, and will be stored in an individual container just for that child that is kept out of reach of children on a shelf, or in cupboard.

If a Child Becomes Ill at the Centre during Program

In the event that a child shows any signs or symptoms of illness, other than what can be explained (e.g. teething, seasonal allergies), the parent will be called to immediately pick-up their child. If the parent is not available by phone, the emergency contact will be called. While the child waits to be picked-up, they will be supervised by staff member. The staff will wear a medial mask, face shield/goggles, gown and gloves, and children over the age of 2 years who can tolerate a mask will be asked to wear one.

If a Staff Becomes Ill at the Centre

If a staff member becomes ill with COVID-19 related symptoms at the program, they will be separated from children and other staff and sent home immediately. Public Health requirements and instructions will be followed.

Reporting Cases of COVID-19

Each Public Health unit has a requirement for programs to report confirmed cases of COVID-19. One case of COVID-19 does not necessarily result in a program being closed. Public Health will do contact tracing to determine whom the individual came in close contact with at the program and will determine the requirement for closure of a room or program based on their findings.

Licensed childcare programs are required to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the Ministry of Education. If required by Public Health, parents will be notified.

Use of Masks

All adults in a child care setting (i.e., childcare staff and placement students) are required to wear medical masks and eye protection (i.e., face shield). While inside in the childcare premises, including in hallways.

- All children in grades 1 and above are required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while inside, including in hallways.
- All children in JK/SK are strongly encouraged but not required to wear a non-medical or cloth mask while inside in the child care premises, including in hallways (see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/face-coverings-and-face-masks> for information about the use of masks on the provincial COVID-19 website or the [Public Health Ontario factsheet on non-medical masks](#)). Parents/guardians are responsible for providing their school-aged child (ren) with a mask(s).
- The use of masks is required outdoors for adults and children if physical distancing of at least 2-metres can not be maintained between individuals.
- Masks are not recommended for children under the age of two (see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/face-coverings-and-face-masks> for information about the use of masks on the provincial COVID-19 website).

Hands will be washed prior to donning (putting on) a mask and after doffing (removing) a mask.

Nutrition

During this time of COVID-19 recovery children will continue to be provided with snacks however, we have changed our meal practices to ensure there is no self-serve or sharing of food at snack times and that includes the following

- Utensils will be used to serve food.
- Food will be served in individual portions to the children.
- There will be no items shared (i.e., serving spoon or saltshaker).

Staff will be responsible for serving all food and drinks to children and bowls of food will be kept out of the reach of children on a cart or counter.

Please do not send any food from home unless approved by the supervisor and labelled with your child's name.

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Multi-use utensils will be cleaned and sanitized between uses as per requirements outlined in Food Premises Regulation 493/17.

- SEC will assign a staff for food preparation.
- Food handlers must be in good health and practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Physical distancing will be maintained in the kitchen and food prep area.
- Snacks will be provided in individual portions.
- Washing hands (staff and children) before and after eating food.
- Educators will reinforce “no sharing” food or items between children.
- Limited chairs will be spaced out around the tables.
- Educators will sit and eat with the children while role modeling and engaging in conversations.

Rest Time

Children 0-3.8 years are provided with an opportunity to rest each day. Children who do not sleep, or wake up early, are provided with quiet activities. Where cots cannot be placed 2 meters apart, children will lay down head to foot on their own cot. Please send only blankets and sleep toys that can be laundered, as they will be sent home to be washed daily.

Visitors, Field Trips and Special Guests

At this time, all special activities like field trips, special guests that do presentations, and visitors will be suspended. As the situation improves, and Public Health advises, community activities will be reconsidered. Children can continue to take neighborhood walks, as long as physical distancing is maintained from members of the public.

Pick-Up

At the end of each day, when you arrive at the program, call the program phone number. A staff member will escort your child to the designated pick up area. You must maintain physical distancing guidelines when waiting for your child. To accommodate this process, restricted arrival and pick up time may be required at your program. Your program Supervisor will provide you with specific details on the process.

Placing your child care space on hold

Families who are not ready for their child (ren) to return to care upon the reopening of your childcare program can place their childcare space on hold for a reasonable length of time. Fees **will not** be charged during this time. Space availability in the future will be dependent on current registration levels and groups size maximums. If program capacity or our hold policy changes

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and we can no longer guarantee your child's space, you will be notified and given the option to resume service or withdraw from the program.

Withdrawal Notification

If you choose to withdraw your child from their SEC childcare program, refer to *Withdrawal or Termination of Service* section in the current *School Age Parent Handbook* dated January 2020.