

EMMANUEL LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL
COVID-19 PANDEMIC HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK 2020-2021
Updated February 5, 2021

Please note all information in this handbook supersedes/overrides any information contained in our annual ELP Parent Handbook.

Emmanuel Lutheran Preschool is licensed through the Virginia Department of Social Services and is an outreach of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Inc. We are committed to providing an outstanding early childhood education experience coupled with the highest standards to protect the health and safety and of all students and staff in our care. During this current pandemic our preschool has given considerable thought and planning to update our current policies and using best practices as required and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health, and Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Division (VDSS).

You can access the current CDC Guidelines we used to prepare for a safe return to school and operating school during COVID-19 at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

COVID-19 Updated Health and Safety Policy

Daily health screenings will be provided for both staff and all children when they arrive at school. Staff will wash hands upon arrival and children will wash hands upon entering the facility and may use hand sanitizer before entering. Teachers have received training on COVID-19 symptoms as well as preventative measures to ward off the spread. They will also receive additional training on infection control, cleaning, and disinfection.

Parents are responsible for providing their Daily Health Screening through the Brightwheel app as well as providing their signed weekly Waiver.

Any child exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms during the day will need to be picked up immediately. Any person with a temperature above 100.4°F will not be allowed to stay at school. People listed on the student's pickup authorization form will be contacted if a parent can't be reached or is unable to retrieve their child within a reasonable timeframe. A teacher exhibiting these symptoms will also be required to leave school. A child should not attend with any symptoms of COVID-19. See below:

- No fever of 100.4°F or higher/No headache or medication
- No cough/shortness of breath
- No contact/exposure to Covid-19 in the last 14 days
- No loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- No travel to a Covid-19 “hot spot” in the last 14 days (see Travel)
- No other communicable illness in the household

If a child/staff member has a fever only, s/he will be required to stay at home until s/he is fever free without medication for 48 hours.

- If a child displays multiple COVID-19 symptoms, s/he will be required to stay at home for a minimum of seven days, with at least three days that are fever free.
- If a child has a diagnosis other than COVID-19, a physician may send a letter of clearance to return to school.
- If a child, staff member, or family member is diagnosed with COVID-19, ELP is required by law and will immediately notify the Fairfax County Health Department and strictly follow their instructions. Such directions will include disinfecting protocol, potential closure of classroom/building, and returning to school guidelines.
- If a staff member becomes ill during the day they will be excluded immediately and sent home to self-isolate.
- If a child becomes ill during the day, they will be isolated and monitored by an ELP staff member in a separate room set aside for that purpose and parent notified.

Travel

In keeping with CDC recommendations, any child who travels to a "COVID-19 hot spot," travels internationally, and/or by airplane should self-quarantine at home for a period of 14 days to monitor for any potential COVID-19 symptoms. Likewise, if a family member/visitor in your home has arrived from a "COVID-19 hot spot" or another country, your child should follow the 14-day self-quarantine. There are some websites you can consult, the first which explains how serious the pandemic may be by area listed below:

<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>

Parents should also check out the CDC website which has the following:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

State Licensing Requirements

- State licensing regulations require that we send home any child/staff member who exhibits any of the noted signs of illness. The Brightwheel app allows parents to notify the school or they can use the school email emmanuelpreschool2@gmail.com
- Families should also notify the school at once if their child has been exposed to or has contracted COVID-19 or another contagious disease found on this list: Reportable Contagious Disease List
- If a child is absent due to a contagious disease, a note of clearance from a pediatrician will be required before the child returns to school.

- Parents/caregivers must notify their child’s teacher and the ELP office of any allergy or other medical problem, such as food or insect bite allergies.
- All children must have up to date immunizations as required by the Department of Health and Social Services for preschool attendance.

Mask Requirements

- All children and staff are required to wear a face mask that follows CDC guidelines. No masks with built in “vents” or single layer masks are allowed. Masks should be washed each evening.
- Masks will be worn at all times on the preschool grounds and inside the building. The teachers will assist children with times for short and safe “mask breaks” during the day if needed. These breaks will only be when there is an appropriate area for social distancing and preferably outdoors.
- All parents and caregivers must wear a mask at all times while on the church grounds waiting with their child to be screened at morning drop off or when waiting to pick up their child.
- The Preschool has an emergency supply of adult and child-sized masks as well as other PPE equipment. We ask that all parents supply an extra mask, if possible, for their child in a marked paper or zip-lock baggie inside their child’s tote bag.

Morning Drop Off & Afternoon Pick Up Procedures – Building Access

- To minimize contact, social/physical distance markers will be placed outside in the parking lot, and inside on the floor and in hallways, in order to help our families and students maintain appropriate distance. Everyone is asked to refrain from hugging and shaking hands.
- Hand sanitizer will be available as needed.
- Inside the building the children will have markers for when waiting in line, waiting to use the restroom, or when leaving their classroom.
- Until such times as CDC and VDSS guidelines are changed, no one other than staff and the students will have access to the inside of the preschool, church building, including restrooms. The playground is also off limits at this time except for children within the preschool program.
- At designated times (such as the first week of school), the Registrar will have a table near the playground entrance where you can turn in paperwork, pay tuition, and speak with office staff. Please observe the markers showing physical distancing.
- Teachers will greet children outside their classrooms and do a visual inspection for signs of illness. Following new CDC/FCPS guidelines, there will be no morning temperature check at the classroom door, but the preschool will check temperatures should the teacher have any concerns about a child’s health.
- Each family will need to complete the Daily Health Check on Brightwheel prior to the teacher escorting their child into the school.

- If a family does not yet have their child ready for drop off, the teacher may ask the parent to wait in another area maintaining physical/social distancing. Parents can return to the line for check in when they are ready.
- Class arrival and dismissal times may be staggered so that fewer people are gathered in the parking lot, near outdoor walkways, and by classroom doors to allow for social/physical distancing.
- Only one parent/caregiver may drop off/pick up each child. Siblings should not accompany a parent dropping off a child if possible. All ELP's classroom doors face the parking lot and are just a few feet away. We recommend families wait in the car until your designated drop off/pick up time and come to the door promptly with your preschooler having already completed the Daily Health Check.
- Parents cannot enter the classrooms. Parents will meet teachers outside the door, where they will say "goodbye" or "hello" and transfer their child to the teacher.
- Parents are asked to keep in-person conversations to a minimum. We recommend parents use the teachers "elp" email for communication. Our teachers generally respond within 24 hours to general inquiries. In case of an emergency or urgent matter during school hours, please email or call the preschool office directly at (703) 938-6187.
- As a reminder, the playground is not available for use for anyone but preschool classes at this time. Parents and siblings are prohibited from waiting inside the playground or handling the equipment.
- No program tours will be offered until further notice. A virtual tour is available on our web site elcvienna.org/preschool

Handwashing/Cleaning Protocol

- All classroom floors, chairs, counters, and sinks will be cleaned and disinfected daily (or more as needed). Classroom tables will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each snack time.
- Teachers and students are required to vigorous 20 second hand washing immediately upon entering the building and regularly throughout the day. When children move from one area to another in their classroom, they will be required to wash their hands, as well as after toileting, and before and after snack. Children will also wash their hands before dismissal to go home.
- The bathrooms will be disinfected regularly throughout the day per CDC guidelines.
- Outdoor equipment handles and high-touch areas will be wiped or sprayed with a disinfectant after each class ends their playground time.
- Where possible, separate outdoor toys will be used for each group daily. Toys that are used for each class will be cleaned and sanitized between use. Soft toys will be avoided.
- Common door handles will be wiped with disinfectant throughout the school day per CDC guidelines.
- When dealing with a sick child or clean up involving bodily fluids, teachers and staff will have PPE including smocks and gloves as well as their masks for these events.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.

Classroom Guidelines & Protocols

- Class sizes have been reduced and children will stay within their “bubble” or “pods” I.e. the same teachers and classmates remain together through the day (no mixing from different classrooms). Physical arrangement of the classrooms with activity centers has been thoughtfully considered to allow physical distancing, but children can enjoy individual exploration and play and will enjoy positive social development and interaction.
- In each class, we have many manipulatives and toys so children do not have to share with one another. We will rotate a variety of toys and manipulatives throughout the day and they will later be cleaned and sanitized. The preschool has an ample supply allowing us to rotate these items easily allowing time for disinfection between use.
- Each child will have their own box of art supplies (crayons, markers, glue, scissors) as well as their own playdough or sensory items.
- Transparent tabletop dividers and floor play dividers will remind children of distancing requirements and define play space while encouraging and allowing communication and social interactions.
- A full change of season-appropriate clothes (underwear, socks, shirt, pants) should be in your child’s cubby at all times. Please replace any items upon teacher notification, including swapping out clothing according to the weather. Tote bags will stay at school.
- Classroom windows will be kept open as much as possible to allow for ongoing ventilation.

Water/Snacks

- We will have water pitchers and individual use cups available in each classroom for children to regularly access water. Children may remove their masks for a drink, put their mask back on, wash hands and return to class. Teachers will be available to assist students.
- We will follow the strict CDC and VDSS guidelines including cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces before serving our school-provided snack. We will allow the required distancing between children which may mean using the entire classroom during the snack period. Teachers may schedule outdoor snack times weather permitting.
- Unless a child has a diagnosed allergy or a parent/caregiver has pre-arranged a special snack with our ELP staff, there is no outside food allowed into the center.
- Children with diagnosed allergies will follow all guidelines set out in our Parent Handbook regarding regular snack time as well as special snack days.

Playground/Outdoor Play

- We will stagger our outdoor play and garden times to avoid overlap of children.
- Outdoor play areas will be used for one class “bubble/pod” at a time, on a rotational basis.
- During inclement weather, each class will have their own designated indoor recess classroom area which will only be used by that class.
- Classrooms may have their own set of toys to be used only by that class, that day.

Note: ELP remains committed to providing an outstanding program which is safe and healthy for your child. We have not increased tuition or fees and appreciate your understanding that we will essentially be operating at a loss during this 2020-2021 school year. We have spent significant funds to purchase PPE, table and floor dividers, Air Filtration units, and additional cleaning materials. We have also added the Brightwheel app which should allow us to offer even better services including communication and student assessment.

In the event one of our staff should need to be absent due to a Covid-19 illness, new Virginia state employment laws mandate our staff are paid throughout their two-week recovery period and we will provide quality, trained substitute teaching staff during this time period.