



**Emmanuel**  
LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL



## **COVID-19 PANDEMIC HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK 2021-2022**

*Updated August 26, 2021*

*The information in this handbook supersedes any information contained in our annual ELP Parent Handbook.*

Emmanuel Lutheran Preschool is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education 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 of all students and staff in our care. During this continuing pandemic, our preschool has given considerable thought and planning to update our policies and ensuring the use of best practices as required and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). **We appreciate our families trust and partnership to keep our school open and safe for in-person learning.**

Click this link for the current [CDC Guidelines](#) used to prepare for a safe return to school for early childhood centers during COVID-19.

### **COVID-19 Updated Health and Safety Policy 2021-2022**

Daily health observations are performed by our teachers for all children when they arrive at school. This is a visual inspection of the child to check for any concerns such as a cough, discharge from eyes, flushed skin, etc. Teachers are trained to recognize early signs of common illnesses and possible COVID-19 symptoms, and preventative measures to ward off any spread. They review training before the start of the school year on infection control including cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection. Best practices are followed to mitigate exposure and risk.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for completing their child's Daily Health Screening as part of their morning check-in using the Brightwheel app each morning upon arrival. This includes an acknowledgement of our COVID-19 Waiver of Liability. Everyone must wear a mask covering the nose and mouth when on school and church property. Students and teachers now have the option to remove their masks during playground time and other outside activities where they can distance appropriately.

Any child exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms during the day will need to be picked up from school immediately. Any person with a temperature above 100.4°F will not be allowed to remain at school. Individuals authorized as emergency contacts will be called if a parent can't be reached or is unable to retrieve their child within a reasonable timeframe. Your child should not attend school if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 exposure as listed:

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher with headache (without treating with medication)
- Cough or shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Contact/exposure to COVID-19 in the last 7 days
- Travel to a Covid-19 "hot spot" in the last 7 days (see *Travel* section below)
- Other communicable illnesses present in the household

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 staff member becomes ill during the school day, a substitute will be called and the staff member will immediately go home to self-isolate. If a child becomes ill during the day, they will be isolated and monitored by a staff member in a separate room that is set aside for that purpose and their parents will be notified for pickup.

If a child/staff member has a fever only, they will be required to stay at home until they are fever-free, without medication, for 48 hours. If a child has a diagnosis other than COVID-19, a physician may provide 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 to notify the Fairfax County Health Department and strictly follow their instructions. Such directions may include disinfecting protocol, potential closure of a classroom, or even the building. Return to school guidelines will be included.

## **Travel**

In keeping with CDC recommendations, any child who travels to a “COVID-19 hot spot,” travels internationally, and/or by airplane should “get tested with a [viral test](#) 3-5 days after travel **AND** stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.” You must stay home for 10 days if you are not tested, to monitor for any potential COVID-19 infection. Likewise, if a family member/visitor in your home has arrived from a “COVID-19 hot spot” or another country, your child should also follow quarantine protocols. There are some websites which explains how serious the pandemic may be by geographic area:

- <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>
- [Domestic Travel Recommendations during COVID-19](#)

## **Virginia Department of Education Licensing Requirements for Reporting Illness**

- Parents/caregivers must notify their child’s teacher and the ELP office of any allergy or other medical issue, such as food or insect bite allergies.
- All children must have up-to-date immunizations as required by the VDOE for preschool attendance.
- State licensing regulations require that we send home any child/staff member who exhibits any of the noted signs of illness. The Brightwheel app makes it easy for parents to notify the school of any communicable illness. Families can also choose to contact us through the preschool email: [emmanuelpreschool2@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelpreschool2@gmail.com).
- Families must 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.

## **Mask Requirements**

The ELP policy requires everyone to wear a mask (covering their nose and mouth) during the drop-off and pick-up of students before and after school, even when outdoors, regardless of vaccination status. No masks with built-in “vents” or single layer masks are allowed.

We will continue to require masks for teachers and students while indoors. Students will remove their masks during snack time (and possible after school lunch programs) when they are seated at tables. Social distancing and barriers will be used as needed.

Following current Fairfax County Health Department guidelines, students and staff may remove their masks when outside for playground, garden, and outdoor activities. Parents may request that their student(s) be allowed to remain masked during these times. Teachers will manage mask storage while outside and help students put their masks back on before returning indoors. Masks should be washed each evening.

The Preschool has a limited supply of adult and child-sized masks in the office. Parents are asked to provide a supply of extra masks for their child that are comfortable and fit well. Extra masks (3 are recommended) should be stored in a paper or plastic bag identified with the child’s name and will be kept inside their child’s tote bag. Please replenish the mask supply as needed.

## Morning Drop Off & Afternoon Pick Up Procedures – No Building Access

Following social distancing protocols, we ask that only one parent/caregiver drop off/pick up a child. All ELP's classroom access doors face the parking lot. Have your Brightwheel app ready to scan the QR code to complete the Daily Health Screen each morning. **Parents must check into Brightwheel** and show the teacher the **green confirmation screen** as part of morning drop off routine. Any health screen questions that remain unanswered will not result in a green screen and may prompt a follow up discussion with the office, but not necessarily be a reason for exclusion from the school day. Everyone is required to wear a mask over their nose and mouth. Only staff and students will have access to the inside of the preschool and church building, including restrooms. The playground is closed before and after preschool.

- Teachers will greet children at their outside classroom doors and perform a health screening for signs of illness. If a teacher has any concerns about a child's health during the school day, they will check a child's temperature. For rooms inside the building without direct access, the floater or office staff will greet the children at the lobby glass doors and perform a health check, then escort them to their classroom teachers after they are checked in.
- Parents are asked to keep in-person conversations at the door to a minimum. We recommend parents communicate with teachers using Brightwheel and allow time for teachers to respond after the school day. For urgent matters during school hours, please call the preschool office directly at (703) 938-6187 or message us through Brightwheel.
- At designated times (such as Sneak Peek and the first week of school), the Registrar will be available outside near the office entrance to collect paperwork and answer any questions. If you need to drop something off, message us on Brightwheel as we're not always in the office and it's helpful to know when to expect you.
- Once your child is inside, we encourage parents to move away from the classroom as this can be a distraction or upsetting to a child (not necessarily your own). We encourage parents who arrive early for dismissal to also wait out of view until noon. **Scanning the QR code with Brightwheel to check your child out is all that's required at dismissal time.**
- No in-person school tours will be offered until further notice. A virtual tour is available on our website at [elcviennapreschool.org](http://elcviennapreschool.org)

## Handwashing/Cleaning Protocol

- All classroom floors, chairs, counters, and sinks will be cleaned, disinfected, as needed. Classroom tables will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each activity and snack time.
- Teachers and students are required to vigorously wash hands with soap and water for 20 second upon entering the building and regularly throughout the day. Children will also wash their hands when moving from one activity area to another in their classroom, as well as after toileting, before and after snack, before and after outdoor activities, and before dismissal to go home.
- The bathrooms will be disinfected regularly per CDC guidelines.
- Common door handles will be wiped with disinfectant per CDC guidelines.
- In cases of toileting accidents or helping a sick child involves cleaning bodily fluids, teachers and staff will follow training protocols and have PPE available for these instances.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.

## Classroom Guidelines & Protocols

- Class sizes are reduced and children will stay within their "classroom cohorts," meaning the same teachers and classmates remain together through the day (no combining children from different classrooms). The arrangement of the classroom layout with activity centers has been thoughtfully considered to allow physical distancing, but children can enjoy exploration and play and will enjoy positive social development and interaction. In each class, we offer a variety of manipulatives and educational toys. We rotate them throughout the week and they are cleaned and sanitized daily. Teachers define play spaces while encouraging and allowing communication and social interactions. Classrooms also continually keep an air filtration unit running, and windows are kept open as much as possible to allow for air flow and ventilation, even in winter months. When the weather turns colder, it is advisable to dress your child in layers so they can manage their comfort level in the classroom. An extra pullover stored in their tote bag can keep them warm when going outside or if their room feels chilly with the window open. In addition, please include a full change of seasonally-appropriate clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, pants) in their tote bag. Please replace items as they are used and change them out accordingly with each season.

Inside the building, the children will have floor markers to help them maintain distance when waiting in line, waiting to use the restroom, or when leaving their classroom. We conduct monthly fire drills and also practice shelter-in-place and other lockdown drills. Listening for and complying with their teacher's instructions is the most important part of every safety drill.

### **Water/Snacks**

We follow strict CDC and licensing guidelines for preparing, serving, and cleaning up after snack time. Water pitchers and disposable cups are available throughout the day rather than using a water fountain. Teachers and staff review training for proper food handling and sanitizing all surfaces before and after serving the daily school-provided snack and apple juice. Transparent tabletop dividers provide a physical barrier while children are seated at tables that are arranged to offer distancing, yet allow social conversation. After washing their hands, children will be instructed to take their masks off when served, and put their masks back on immediately after snack.

Only children with diagnosed and documented food allergies may be served a treat brought from home; typically this happens when the class is celebrating a special occasion. These treats must be pre-arranged with the child's teacher. Children with diagnosed food allergies will follow all guidelines set out in our Parent Handbook regarding regular snack time as well as special treat days.

### **Playground/Common Indoor Areas**

The playground is closed before and after school until further notice. Classes have scheduled outdoor play and garden times to avoid any overlap of children in the same physical space. Common indoor areas such as the Creative Movement/Fellowship Hall space upstairs in the church have windows and good air flow. This large space allows children to spread out and enjoy big body play and gross motor development activities. Chapel (only 3s and 4s PreK classes at this time) in the main Sanctuary allows each child to sit socially distanced from their classmate in addition to ample separation from other classes. Children and adults are masked at all times.

ELP remains committed to providing an outstanding program which is both safe and healthy for your child. We maintained a standard minimal tuition increase in 2021-2022 even though our expenses continue to be significant due to continuing requirements for PPE, safety equipment such as tabletop barriers and floor play dividers, air filtration units, and additional cleaning materials. We have offset some of these costs with a reduction of outside special events. We thank you for your trust, support, and your patience as we do our best to keep our program open and promise to revisit our policies should there be any changes from the CDC, VDOE, or Health Department.

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