



SOAR Inclusive Preschool: COVID-19 Safety Plan *last revised August 27 20*

Rationale for reopen

Preschool provides important social and learning opportunities for young children. As schools and daycares all over British Columbia prepare to re-open in some capacity, SOAR Inclusive Preschool will re-open in a reduced capacity that allows the resumption of some of these opportunities while prioritizing the safety of our learners, staff, and local community.

It is known that children play a role in influenza virus transmission in the community. Initial COVID-19 data suggests that children are less affected than adults. Number and severity of COVID-19 cases in children appear low. Other data (from household transmission studies in China) suggest that children are infected from adults, rather than vice versa. These preliminary conclusions will evolve as the pandemic continues, and more evidence is collected and interpreted by medical experts and health authorities. SOAR continues to follow the guidelines and recommendations of these bodies.

Class composition and population:

- COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children. In B.C., less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive. Most children are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection.
- Children under 1 year of age and older children with immune suppression and medical complexity are considered more vulnerable and at higher risk for illness.
- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in childcare facilities, schools or in community settings.
- Childcare facility closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable children and youth. SOAR services learners who are under the age of 5 including many learners who have extra support needs.

Assessed Risk of our Preschool Environment

- Directors and preschool manager met multiple times in the month prior to reopening, and the preschool manager spoke with frontline staff and families.
- We identified areas where people gather (front desk, office, kitchen, exits, cubby area) and create protocols to remove or reduce risk in these areas.
- We identified job tasks where workers, learners, and family members are close together (pick up, drop off, snack, bathroom, Circle Time) and modified those routines to reduce risk.
- We identified and removed most shared toys, tools, and materials or replaced them with low-risk items.
- We identified commonly touched items and changed routines, removed items, and updated cleaning and sanitizing protocols to include these areas.

Physical Distancing

For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead. SOAR will:

- Reduce class sizes to maximum of 10 children* and 4 staff *(teacher, support workers) plus and manager in the classroom at any one time. * Special considerations may be made and there may be one additional staff and or student on any given day.
- When possible, separate learners between indoor and outdoor learning spaces.
- Caregivers, service providers, and non-preschool support staff remain outside the classroom during class instruction hours

When it is not possible for workers to maintain physical distance from and between children, SOAR will:

- Minimize the frequency of direct physical contact with children.
- Separate play areas in order to space children apart. Note that children who live in the same home do not need to maintain physical distance from each other.
- Create smaller groups or cohorts of children and keeping these groups separate from each other.
- Minimize the number of different workers that interact with the same child or group of children.
- Organize snack areas to space children apart.
- Stagger snack times.
- Include outdoor space for snack time when possible, while maintaining physical distancing and safe hygiene.
- Maintain at least 2 metres between workers. Where this is not possible, for example when transferring a very young child from one worker to another, plan and communicate the work task in advance to reduce time spent in close proximity.
- Post occupancy limits for common areas such as break rooms, laundry rooms, and kitchens.

Meeting areas and Pick up/Drop off procedure

- Individual drop-offs and pick-ups will occur through the back door that connects to our outdoor space. (See diagram in Appendix D.)
- Drop-off: One preschool staff will meet students and escort them inside individually. Sidewalk tape will mark where caregivers and children can wait until the child’s turn. (On a rainy day, families may wait in their personal vehicles.) Families arriving late will call the school, and a staff member will come meet the child.
- Pick-up: At 11:30 or 3pm, a SOAR staff will release each child outside to caregivers one at a time. Please maintain physical distancing from other adults while waiting for the pickup of your child.
- Daily Health check is required at each drop-off, prior to arriving at school. The caregiver will sign the child in on the posted sheet and indicate the child has passed the daily health check.
- Hugs and handshakes are discouraged (unfortunately).
- Parents and caregivers should use the pen from the labelled “clean jar,” and after use return them to the “used jar.” Please avoid touching the sign in/out sheet directly. Parents and caregivers should practice hand hygiene before and after touching the sign in/out sheet.

Exchange of Materials

- If students are unable to carry their own belongings into the classroom, parents will leave it in the designated area and staff will bring indoors.
- SOAR will only accept e-transfers or credit card, cheque, or cash in a sealed envelope.

Hand-washing

Staff, children, and others are to wash their hands immediately upon entering the facility. If child is resistant to handwashing, a separate hand-washing plan will be made with family and may include use of a washcloth, different soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, etc.

Staff will wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:

- When they arrive at the workplace and before they go home
- Before and after handling food (raw, cooked or pre-packaged), preparing bottles or feeding children
- Before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self

- After changing diapers
- After assisting a child to use the toilet
- After using the toilet
- After contact with body fluids (e.g., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
- Before putting on and taking off personal protective equipment
- After cleaning tasks
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

SOAR will support **children** to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:

- When they arrive at school and before they go home
- Before and after eating and drinking
- After a diaper change
- After using the toilet
- After playing outside
- After sneezing or coughing
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

SOAR will provide education and direction to workers and children to:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Not touch their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

School Cleaning & Disinfection

PAFN will clean bathrooms daily and remove garbage twice per day. SOAR staff mop and vacuum our floors once per day and as needed. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures, in accordance with BCCDC recommendations, are posted in the facility and followed completely.

Surface Cleaning: All surfaces including; tabletops, door handles, light switches, chairs, shelves and counters will be sanitized upon staff arrival in the morning, between classes, as used, and at the end of the day.

Toys: All toys will be sanitized with a bleach solution between classes and deeply cleaned at the end of each day. Toys will also be rotated daily. Limited toys will be available per day.

- Toys and objects that children have placed in their mouths are stored in a bin labeled “USED” until clean and disinfected.
- Toy, objects, and surfaces that may contact bodily fluids will be cleaned immediately and between uses by different children.

- Diapering stations will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Towels will be washed after each use.
- If a worker or child leaves the workplace due to symptoms of COVID-19, all areas of contact will be cleaned and disinfected immediately.
- SOAR will maintain an adequate supply of cleaning and disinfection materials.

Plush Toys and Cushions: Surfaces that are not easily cleaned, such as plush stuffed animals and pillows, will be removed from the classroom.

- We ask that parents and caregivers only bring personal comfort items (e.g., stuffed animals) if they are clean and laundered at the end of each day.

Updated Sickness Policies in our Handbook as a result of COVID19

Sickness policy will be very strict and highly enforced among staff and students. One of the most important efforts we can do to reduce transmission is to **STAY HOME IF WE ARE SICK.**

Daily Health screenings will be required for all staff and students (Appendix B). **After replying “Yes” to any of the screening questions, your child may not attend school for 10 days or until symptoms resolve- whichever is longer, or after being cleared by a medical professional and symptoms have resolved.**

If a child or staff starts to feel ill or display ANY symptoms related to COVID19, they will be immediately sent home (Appendix A). While waiting for pick-up, they will remain in the office with a school staff. The staff will wear gloves and a mask, set them up with screen time, and wait with them while a parent comes to pick them up. For more information see Appendix A.

Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada, or who is a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

Any child living with a household member who has COVID symptoms or is waiting for test results from a COVID test may NOT attend school until symptoms resolve and a negative test result has been confirmed.

Regrettably, class may be abruptly cancelled due to the unexpected sickness of staff.

At this time, there will be no refunds issued for missed classes due to illness.

Use of PPE

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Child Care Settings states that personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, are not needed beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for

the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work.

- Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks.
- Staff will wear disposable gloves when cleaning bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine) and when diapering.
- PPE may be required for workers who are responsible for cleaning and disinfection. We will read product labels and Safety Data Sheets to help make this determination.
- Cloth or non-medical homemade masks are not recommended. Wearing one is a personal choice. More information about COVID-related mask use is available on the BCCDC.
- In young children in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.
- There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth, or homemade masks in childcare setting at his time. Wearing one is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.



Appendix A. Protocol for child or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 in a child care setting

Child with Symptoms of COVID-19

IF CHILD DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:

Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms AND until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

IF CHILD DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS WHILE AT CHILD CARE:

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Identify a staff member to supervise the child.
2. Identified staff member should immediately separate the symptomatic child from others in a supervised area until they can go home.
3. Contact the child's parent or caregiver to pick them up right away.
4. Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill child. If this is not possible, the staff member may use a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
5. Provide the child with tissues, and support as necessary so they can practice respiratory hygiene.
6. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
7. Avoid touching the child's body fluids. If you do, wash your hands.
8. Once the child is picked up, wash your hands.
9. Clean and disinfect the space where the child was separated and any areas used by the child (e.g., bathroom, common areas).
10. If concerned, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further advice.

Parents or caregivers must pick up their child promptly once notified that their child is ill.

If a child or staff member is assessed by their family physician or nurse practitioner and it is determined that they do NOT have COVID-19, they may return to child care once symptoms resolve.

Staff with Symptoms of COVID-19

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:

Staff must be excluded from work, stay home and self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms AND until all symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS WHILE AT WORK:

Staff should go home right away where possible.

If unable to leave immediately, the symptomatic staff person should:

1. Separate themselves into an area away from others.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait for a replacement or to be picked up.
4. Remaining staff must clean and disinfect the space where staff was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., office, bathroom, common areas).
5. If concerned, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further advice.



Appendix B. Daily Health Check for **Students**

Please answer these questions daily, to the best of your ability and with honesty:

Is your child **NEWLY** (ie. started within the last 24 hours) experiencing any of the following:

- Fever
- Chills
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New muscle aches or headache
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Extreme lethargy
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Loss of smell or taste

Yes

No

If you have answered **Yes**, to either of these questions, you must keep your child at home for 10 days AND until symptoms resolve. Please feel free to call 811 for more individual and situational information to determine whether or not your child should get tested for COVID19.

Has your child travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days OR had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19?

Yes

No

If you have answered **Yes**, you must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days and monitor symptoms.

If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811, or call your health care provider.



Appendix C. Daily Health Check for **Staff**

Please answer these questions daily, to the best of your ability and with honesty:

Are you **NEWLY** (ie. started within the last 24 hours) experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New muscle aches or headache
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Extreme lethargy
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Loss of smell or taste

Yes

No

If you have answered **Yes** to this question, for any reason, you must stay home for 10 days, and it is recommended you get a COVID19 test. If your test is negative, you may return to work without waiting 10 days.

Have you travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days OR had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19?

Yes

No

If you have answered **Yes**, you must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days and monitor symptoms.

If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811, or call your health care provider.

Appendix D. Diagram of Pick-up/Drop-off Points

