

Early Years Covid-19 Facilities & Hygiene Procedures

Updated February 23, 2021

Purpose: In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Whistler Waldorf School has made several changes to the way their Licensed Group Childcare programs (Early Years Centre and Little Cedars) operate, all with the intention of keeping our children, families and staff as safe as possible and to help stop the spread of Covid-19. Program changes reflect Ministry of Children and Family Development, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Work Safe B.C., and the B.C. Centre for Disease Control directives.

Preventative measures will be taken in three key areas: Environmental, Personal, & Administrative. These measures apply to the Licensed Group Childcare facilities. If staff and faculty visit the WWS Spruce Grove main site, they will adhere to the main site COVID-19 Facilities and Hygiene procedures posted.

These measures are in addition to the Early Years policies and procedures and the Illness Policy as outlined in the parent handbook.

Environmental Measures

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is very important to help prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces. We have increased cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects like door handles, toilets and toys.

- Daily Cleaning and Sanitizing of Classrooms by ECE faculty and staff
- All licensed group childcare facilities will be well-stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (i.e., soap, clean towels, paper towels and 60%+ alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Doors knobs, light switches, toys used by multiple children and any other high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily.
- Any noticeably dirty surface will be cleaned and disinfected as needed.
- Items not easily cleaned and personal items from home will be limited.
- We stay on top of waste management by emptying garbage containers daily and when full.
- We keep enough toys out to encourage individual play. We offer toys that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
- Toys, manipulatives objects and other items that may not be easily cleaned (including things like sand, foam, playdough, rice etc.) can continue to be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
- Mats will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Keep each child's bedding separate and store in individually labeled bags. Bedding that touches a child's skin will be cleaned weekly or before use by another child.

Personal Measures

Handwashing

Handwashing is a critical aspect of keeping children and our staff safe. Staff will require children wash their hands multiple times a day, as well as before and after certain activities (see below).

Children will wash their hands:

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before eating and drinking
- After using the toilet
- After playing outside
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Childcare staff will wash their hands:

- After assisting a child in using the toilet
- After contact with body fluids (runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
- After cleaning tasks
- After removing gloves
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before and after food preparation
- Before and after helping children with their lunch and snacks

If a sink with warm running water and soap is unavailable, for example, when we are on a nature walk, we will substitute with 60%+ alcohol-based hand sanitizer until we can get back to the Centre and wash hands properly.

Signage regarding hand hygiene is posted at all hand hygiene stations.

Respiratory Hygiene & Etiquette for Staff and Students

Sneezing/Coughing Etiquette is critical for controlling the spread of COVID-19. As such we will be asking that children practice this etiquette;

- Sneeze/cough into a disposable tissue or your sleeve (elbow/arm).
- Direct the sneeze/cough away from those in the general area.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

Refrain from touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands

Daily self-health check-ups by parents/guardians, faculty & staff

In line with our Illness policy, parents and caregivers are aware that their child should not attend childcare if they are sick or are required to self-isolate as per public health officials' direction. Staff will self - assess daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory

diseases using the Daily Health Check and then sign off that they have done so as per WorkSafe BC procedures.

Parents must actively monitor their child's health, and staff and faculty their own health each day. Any children, parents, faculty or staff who are sick or have respiratory illness symptoms are required to remain at home.

- Parents/guardians must keep their child at home if have taken any fever-reducing or masking medication such as Advil or Tylenol.
- Parents/guardians will sign in and out to the Licensed programs as usual, and that will help ensure contact tracing if needed.
- We are not required to take temperatures daily, but in the case of suspected illness or worsening symptoms, we may use a contactless thermometer to take and record the child's temperature, as per our illness policy.
- If a child begins to show symptoms while in our care, their parent/guardian will be required to come and pick them up immediately. Parents are responsible for checking that their phone number(s) and emergency contact details on file are accurate and up to date.
- If the staff or children (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they can continue to attend childcare settings. No assessment or note is required from a health-care provider.
- If after doing the Daily Health Check, the child or staff has COVID-19-like symptoms, they should use the [BC self-assessment tool](#), seek assessment by calling 8-1-1, or by contacting a local health-care provider.
- If, after contacting the health authorities, COVID-19 testing is deemed required, please contact the local health authorities to schedule a time for testing. Individuals should self-isolate while awaiting test results.
- Test results can be accessed at [my ehealth](#) or via the BC CDC (text message alerts)

Self-Isolation and Symptoms

- If after contacting the health authorities, further testing is not recommended, parents and staff should continue to monitor symptoms for 24 hrs. If your child is sick, [use the BC self-assessment tool](#).
- If your child is required to take a COVID test and that test comes back negative, your child is able to return to school, *once they are symptom free for 24 hours*.
- If test results are positive, children and staff members should stay home until they are told by public authorities to end their self-isolation.
- Children and staff may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID19- like symptoms, provided the child/staff is asymptomatic.
- As per public health guidance, it is expected the symptomatic household member seeks assessment by a health-care provider.

If a child starts showing symptoms of what could be influenza or COVID-19, we will:

- Contact the child's parent or caregiver to come and pick them up right away.

- Have a separate and supervised area where we will separate the child from others, keeping the child 2 m away from others, until a parent or caregiver can come and pick them up.
- Continue to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene such as coughing in elbows instead of hands and throwing tissues out immediately after use.
- Do a thorough cleaning and sanitizing of the space once the child has been picked up.

If a member of staff or faculty starts showing symptoms of what could be influenza or COVID-19, they will:

- Immediately wash hands, put on a face covering (PPE) and where possible, self-isolate from the children and other staff members.
- Call the Early Years Chair and/or Early Year Licensing Manager immediately for a substitute teacher in order to maintain ratio.
- Remain on-site until a substitute teacher arrives.
- Follow the WWS Employee guidelines for suspected COVID-19 illness.

Non-Medical Masks & Face Coverings (Masks)

Masks do not prevent the spread of COVID-19 on their own. They should not be used in place of physical distancing or any other measures noted in this document.

Children may wear a mask based on personal or family choice; staff should supervise and support children to ensure safe and proper use if masks are worn.

Staff and other adults should wear a mask when indoors or outdoors and interacting with other adults except when:

- They can consistently maintain physical distance, or
- There is a barrier in place, or
- Eating and drinking.

Staff may choose to wear a mask indoors when engaging in prolonged, close interaction with children. Careful consideration should be given to the potential impact of mask wearing on visual cueing and non-verbal communication with children, as these interactions play an important role in learning and development.

Masks are not needed for interactions between household members.

Masks are not needed when urgent actions are required to support child safety.

Face shields are a form of eye protection for the person wearing it. They may not prevent the spread of droplets from the wearer. Face shields should not be worn in place of masks, except for those communicating using lip-reading, when visual facial cues are essential, or when people may be unable to wear a mask. Clear masks that cover the nose and mouth are another option when visual communication is necessary

Administrative Measures

Limiting Access to the Site

- We are minimising contact with visitors and adults, and request that only one family member come for drop off and pick up each day, with as much consistency as possible. Siblings should stay outside or at home.
- Please keep a 2m distance from others
- Please wear a face covering or mask if you cannot maintain a 2m distance from others.
- Parents are asked not to come in the centre unless an appointment was scheduled.
- Visitors to the Licensed Group Childcares will be limited to essential services only (maintenance providers, licensing inspectors, child specialists) during operating hours. Visitors will be required to sign in and out, wear a face mask, confirm they performed a daily health check, provide contact details and abide by our policies.

Physical distancing

Understandably, physical distancing is challenging in a childcare setting. Within child care settings, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact between staff, avoiding unnecessary physical contact between staff and children, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions where possible, and encouraging everyone to spread out as much as possible within the space available. It is not necessary to attempt to eliminate close contact between children, recognizing the importance of children's emotional, physical and developmental needs.

- Guidelines regarding flow of students through the school site at Spruce Grove (pick-up/drop-off different locations; in hallway/bathroom) have been established.
- School maps outlining traffic flow, outside areas, and pick up and drop off will be followed at Spruce Grove.
- Festivals, parent evenings and other events will be held either virtually to avoid a large number of people gathered in one space.
- No gathering will hold more than 50 individuals. Clear guidelines regarding physical distancing at events will be established and communicated.
- Increase outdoor time.
- Conduct regular activities such snack time, arts and craft time outdoors as weather allows.
- Clean and sanitize shared outdoor items, such as balls or outdoor equipment twice a day.
- Use mini-environments within the facility to reduce number of children in a group, for example we set up 2 or 3 craft areas for drawing, building or doing crafts.
- Increasing the space between children during activities such as snack and lunch by moving or separating tables and chairs.
- Re-directing some children to other areas when several children want to use the same area/activity. This is encouraged but not enforced.
- Reinforcing and reminding children of the rule of "hands to yourself".
- Minimize unnecessary physical contact with children.

Additional measures:

- Food should not be shared by children, and children will not participate in food preparation.
- Avoid close greetings such as handshakes or hugs.
- Children's belongings will be stored separately in cubbies.

Contact with other daycares and the wider community

- In order to best protect our community and families during different phases of the pandemic, we have implemented different levels of 'sharing' and community contact between staff and children cross-enrolled in other programs.
- With a shortage of qualified, licensed Early Childhood Educators in Whistler, the goal is not to make it more restrictive for families, but, rather, to keep as many licensed group daycares in town open and functioning, for the sake of the entire community in the case of an outbreak.

Please review the table below for information.

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phases 3,4	Phase 5
Children	Attending any daycare OK	If attending WWS programs, please no attending other Licensed Group Childcare Programs. Attending outdoor, activity-based programs ok.	If attending WWS programs, please no attending other Licensed Group Childcare Programs. Attending outdoor, activity-based programs ok.	If attending WWS programs, please no attending any other in-person programs, including activity-based programs.
Staff	Substitutes from wider community OK	Substitutes between WWS Little Cedars and WWS EYC ok	No sharing of staff between centres, no outside substitutes.	No sharing of staff between centres, no outside substitutes.