COVID-19 and Early Childhood Education - FAQ

As we continue to navigate the 2020-2021 school year, we realize there will be lots of questions regarding how we will keep preschool students safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety of our youngest learners is our number one priority as we reopen our childcare and preschool classrooms. Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding early childhood education and our child care programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope that this document will help to answer any questions you may have. However, if there are more specific questions you would like answered, please call 720-542-5093. Thank you for your continued support of our early childhood education programs in Westminster Public Schools.

What is the current health guidance for re-opening preschool classrooms?

- [ECE COVID Guidance.pdf](ECE COVID Guidance.pdf)
- [Guidance Link CDHE](Guidance Link CDHE)

How will WPS continue to practice social distancing in preschool when students are in-person?

- We will maintain consistent cohorts (AM/PM) with two staff members assigned to the same group/classroom of students each week.
- Groups/classrooms are not combined or allowed to intermingle in large common areas (i.e. playgrounds or gyms).
- We will have designated playground and gymnasium times for each class.
- Individual play and small group activities will be implemented and encouraged.
- Classrooms have been rearranged to allow for more personal space between student play areas.
- Meals will be individually packaged.
How are we intensifying cleaning and disinfecting efforts in our classrooms?

- We have developed a safe and elevated cleaning schedule that will be implemented daily.
- We will continue to routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This includes cleaning objects/surfaces daily such as doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap cots, toilets, tables, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures.
- In addition, an electrostatic sprayer will be used at the end of the day and as needed throughout the building (when students are not present) to disinfect and sanitize large areas, hard to clean areas (i.e. student cubbies, cots, books, shelves), and other surfaces.
- “Hard to clean” toys and materials will not be used during this time
- All toys that are used in the classroom will be cleaned, disinfected, and rinsed each day.

What can I expect at drop off and pick-up?

- In order to reduce the amount of people in our buildings, we will be implementing a Valet/Outdoor drop off and pickup. Students and their parents will be met at the designated drop off door (this will vary by school) at the designated drop off time. Parents will not be allowed in the facility except by appointment only.
- A staff member will greet you with a wave without a mask on for children to see their familiar face. Staff will then put a mask on when approaching to escort your child into the building.
- There will be a health check station set up and used every morning for staff and students upon entering the building.
- A staff member will conduct a health check before allowing students to enter, they will also assist the parents in checking your student in and out for the day in order to limit the use of the iPad.
- After conducting the health check, students will be escorted to their classroom by an ECE staff member.
- To ensure the safety for our staff and families we kindly ask that parents wear face masks at drop-off and pick-up
Are there changes to the illness policy?

- Several changes to the illness policy have been added by CDHS guidance and Tri-County department in order to ensure the safety of our staff, students, and families. These changes include:
  - Conducting a daily health screener and temperature check for staff and students.
  - Requiring parents to keep their child home when showing any symptoms or signs of sickness and excluding all students and staff who have the following symptoms:
    - Cough
    - Sore throat
    - Shortness of breath
    - Fever 100.4 or more
    - Loss of taste and smell
    - Being in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
  - If a student or staff member becomes sick while at the center they will be removed from the group and will need to leave the center as soon as possible.
  - Students will remain in a designated space until a parent can pick them up. It is a requirement that parents pick up their student within 30 minutes after receiving a phone call from the school.
- For all other illnesses or symptoms please refer to this guidance from Children’s Hospital Colorado
  - Illness Policy - How sick is too sick? When to keep your child at home from school or childcare

Does my student have to wear a mask?

- We require students who are over three years old to wear a mask per the CDPHE guidelines. Face coverings for children under three years old are optional.
- Student face masks will not be worn during naptime, during meals, or during outdoor times.
● We are asking families to provide 2 clean masks daily for their child.
● Children 3-5 years will be closely supervised while wearing masks throughout the day.

**Will staff and teachers be wearing masks?**

● Our staff will be wearing cloth masks at all times as recommended per the CDPHE guidelines. Some staff may also be wearing a face shield.
● Each staff will be provided with 2 clean cloth masks and will be required to launder them daily.

**Why are masks/cloth face coverings being recommended?**

● The use of simple cloth face coverings is advised to slow the spread of the virus and to help people who may have the virus, even if they do not know it (asymptomatic), from transmitting it to others. Wearing a non-medical mask protects others by reducing the droplets and viral particles that spread between people as we talk and interact -- especially in situations where a physical distance of 6 feet cannot be maintained.

**What tips do you have for helping introduce children to the masks/cloth face coverings?**

● We encourage you to talk to your child about people in your community who wear masks. Firefighters, doctors, nurses, dentists—even superheroes—all wear masks! Why? Because it’s their job to protect people!
● Keep your discussion simple. Explain that wearing a mask is just like washing our hands or covering our mouths when we cough. It’s another way to keep ourselves and our friends healthy.

**What other personal items can my child bring to school?**

● Per the CDPHE guidelines, all students are asked to bring as little as needed in order to limit additional contact from home and school. Below is a list of things your student can bring for childcare programming:
○ Naptime blanket and cot/crib sheet (no stuffed animals or pillows)
○ A personal water bottle (clearly labeled with child’s name)
○ 2 clean masks (if 3+ years)
○ Change of clothes and shoes
○ Diapers and diaper cream (for younger children still toilet training)

● All personal items will be stored separately in their cubby.
● Toys from home are not allowed
● Naptime bedding will be sent home on the last scheduled day of the week for each student in order to be washed and dried.

I’m holding my child out now, but am interested in registering for the 2021-2022 school year. How do I register for the fall?

● Any family interested in attending an ECE program (childcare/preschool) needs to register online at www.westminsterpublicschools.org.
● Child care enrollment takes place on a rolling basis throughout the year. Preschool enrollment for the 2021-22 school year will begin in January 2022. This will be for half day and full day preschool options.
● Please remember as students return to preschool, up-to-date documents need to be submitted. If your child has had a physical or has gotten any new shots please provide the new records to the ECE office or email them to KRule@westminsterpublicschools.org.

Is there an online/virtual option for preschool?

● We are offering an online preschool option during this school year. Please contact the Early Learning Center @ Gregory Hill at 303-657-3844 for registration information.

As always, please reach out if you have any further questions. We look forward to seeing you and your child soon!