



Updated Dec 1st, 2021.

COVID- 19 Policy- Preschool

Please note that this Health and Safety Policy applies to all staff and children within Inspiring Minds facility.

Dear Parents:

This document is prepared, as per BC CDC Health Guidelines and Dr. Bonnie Henry's recommendations in order to meet the changes due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is important to clarify that Dr. Bonnie Henry has confirmed and encouraged childcares to remain open, where possible, to serve the community. Please remember that the COVID 19 public health emergency is rapidly changing, and our ability to remain open may change with a very short notice.

With strict protocols set out by the government to lessen our risk, we must ensure that all families are able to follow these protocols. If you feel you are unable to comply with these requirements, we will sadly have to recommend you seek other programs that may better suit your needs.

These are the procedures we will follow in accordance with the Safety and Health Recommendations:

- For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus will be on minimizing physical contact and reducing shared items instead.
- We will avoid close greetings (high fives, hugs, handshakes) and will be reminding children to keep their "hands to yourself". Whenever possible and appropriate we will spread children out into different areas and allow distance between children and adults.
- Teachers will incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children when possible and appropriate.
- Teachers will be always wearing a mask indoors.

Health check procedures:

- If you experience symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, we ask you stay home and self-isolate. However, in the event the individual tests negative for COVID-19 and they can provide a copy of the test results to the organization, and they will be permitted back sooner.
- Please understand that it is the parents' responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to the Preschool. **Each day, prior to sending the child to Inspiring Minds Preschool, parents are asked to take the child's temperature at home and make sure that the**

child is well, symptom free, and that he/she has not been given any medications in the last 12 hours. Parents are responsible to report their child’s health status to the teacher upon arrival.

- Children who are ill, including children of essential service providers, should not be permitted to attend the preschool
- Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to working and stay home if they are ill.
- Protocol to follow when a child or staff develops symptoms of COVID-19 at home or at the preschool setting is below:

SYMPTOMS	MAY RETURN WHEN
Fever (temperature of 37C measured under arm or touchless thermometer, chills	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Runny nose, sore throat, Nausea and Vomiting	May return to childcare when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Loss of smell and taste	May return to childcare center after a medical note or negative COVID19 test that confirms the child does not have COVID-19 and the child is symptom free.
Diarrhea	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Cough, Difficulty breathing or wheezing	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Unexplained fatigue, aches, or cold/flu-like symptoms	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Sinus congestion	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Eye Infections, discharge, red/pink eye	May return to childcare centre when the child is symptom free for 48 hours
Children who have just returned from international travel	May return after self-isolating for 14 days and being symptom free
Children who had been in contact with confirmed COVID-19 case	May return to childcare center after a medical note or negative COVID19 test that confirms the child does not have COVID-19 and the child is symptom free.

- If a parent, caregiver and/or staff member are unsure if they or a child should self-isolate, they should use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit. They can contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.
- Appropriate signage has been placed at each entry way and window educating parents on COVID-19 protocols, procedures, and directions at this time,

Illness and Attendance Policy

Teachers and children who are ill will not be permitted to attend Inspiring Minds Preschool. When someone is symptomatic, they must self-isolate and follow directions provided by their health care provider. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness.

Children who become sick while at Inspiring Minds Preschool will be isolated from others, placed on the couch while attended by a teacher wearing a mask. Teachers will inform parents and the parents are expected to pick up their sick child as soon as possible.

Once the sick child is picked up, the area will be sanitized, and the attending teacher will practice diligent hand hygiene. The manager will contact the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.

PLEASE NOTE: Fees will not be refunded for absences due to illness.

A teacher who becomes sick while at Inspiring Minds Preschool will be sent home immediately.

Provision of care in case of staff illness

Teachers are also required to stay home when exhibiting illness symptoms, until they have received a negative COVID-19 test. This presents a significant limitation to our operations in the event of staff illness, and we will attempt to engage a substitute teacher if at all possible. If this is not possible, the program will be unable to operate until the teacher's test is complete and she is able to return to work.

In case we are forced to close the Preschool due to health and safety reasons or lack of staff due to illness up to 15 days-fees will not be refunded. If the preschool stays closed for more than 15 days, fees/post-dated cheques will be returned to the parents/guardians.

Cleaning and disinfection- Inspiring Minds Preschool will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Setting document. This includes but not limited to:

- Toys that have surfaces that are not easily cleaned (e.g., Plush toys) will be removed from the preschool
- Parents will be asked not to send their child to school with any personal items
- General cleaning and disinfecting of common areas will occur at least once a day
- Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., Doorknobs, light switches, faucet handles, tables, chairs, toys) will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day
- Toys and objects that the children have placed in their mouths will be placed in a bin until they are cleaned and disinfected

Hygiene

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene
- Do not touch eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing the "ABC's" or "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star").

- If sinks are not available (e.g., children and staff are outside), supervised use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol may be considered.
- To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, see BCCDC's Hand Hygiene poster and a signage for children.
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance, so that children can clean their hands when they enter
- Hand sanitizer will be kept out of children's reach and supervise its use
- The preschool will always be well-stocked with hand washing supplies including plain soap, clean towels, paper towels, waste bins, and where appropriate, hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Children regularly forget about proper hand washing. Staff and children will often practice, and staff will model washing hands properly in a fun and relaxed way.
- Staff will assist young children with hand hygiene as needed. An info sheet on when children and staff should practice hand hygiene is included as Appendix C.

Staff are required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:

- When staff arrive at the preschool and prior to leaving
- Before and after handling food
- Before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self
- After assisting a child to use the toilet
- After contact with body fluids (e.g., runny nose, spit, vomit, blood)
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After cleaning tasks

Children are required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day, including:

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

Pick up and drop off

- Each day we will be required to ask if your child has any symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease. We will not accept any children if the answer is yes.
- Parents are currently not allowed to access our Preschool. We will be expecting children to come into the room by themselves.
 - o If parents or caregivers must enter the facility at pick up or drop off, only one parent/caregiver will be allowed to enter and following the safety protocol in place.
- Signing children in and out will be done by teachers- the same as before.
- All individuals should avoid close greeting such as hugs and handshakes.

- Children and staff will be required to wash their hands/sanitize immediately upon entering the preschool
- To avoid having too many parents picking up their children at the same time we will be dismissals 5 mins before the end of the class.

Physical Distancing

- All staff should maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from each other when possible.
- Plan and communicate the work task in advance to ensure that time spent in proximity is minimized.
- It is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from children, and between children, when in care. The preschool will adhere to the principle of physical distancing where possible, by:
 - Minimizing the frequency of direct physical contact with children.
 - Creating separate play areas to space children apart. Note that children who live in the same home do not need to maintain physical distance from each other.
 - Organizing snack/meal areas to space children apart.
 - The preschool will have different expectations based on age and/or developmental readiness- e.g., younger children should have minimized direct contact with one another whereas the older children should maintain physical distance whenever possible.
 - The preschool will try to reduce the number of children in a group (e.g., Set up 2 or 3 areas for crafts/coloring
 - The preschool will incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between children and staff
 - Children will not be directly asked to play away from each other or discouraged to play together.
 - The preschool will have a separate, supervised area available for children who have symptoms of illness until they can be picked up and ensure these areas are cleaned and disinfected after the child has left.

Outdoors

- For playing outside, we are using the school primary playground since they are open and safe to be used. Children will be practicing appropriate hand hygiene before, during and after outdoor play. We will be taking children outside more often and stay outside for longer time than in the past. **Please make sure that your child is well equipped/dressed for the weather on any given day.** We will be going outside even when it is raining, so children will need to have adequate protection for cold, wet, and hot days.

Meals and Snacks

- Sharing of food or drinks will not be allowed by staff or children
- Reusable dishware, glasses and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use
- Children will sit together will proper social distance.

Other methods to control risk

- Staff will limit sharing of supplies and equipment (e.g., Pens, telephone, computer) between each other
- An adequate amount of art supplies will be provided to minimize sharing between children
- All personal items will be labeled with the child's name to prevent accidental sharing
- Children will be outside wherever possible, including play time, snack time, and for learning activities.
- There is no evidence that the Covid-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper, or other paper-based products, therefore there will be no need to limit the distribution of books or paper-based educational resources to the children.
- The preschool will minimize the number of adults/staff entering the centre, unless the individual is providing care and/or supporting a child in care (e.g., supportive childcare assistant, ECE practicum student, etc.)

Personal Protective Equipment

- Personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves are not needed in the preschool setting, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. They should only be used when all other controls have been fully explored.
- Cloth or non-medical homemade masks are not recommended. Wearing one is a personal choice. In young children, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.

According to the BC Ministry of Health: COVID-19 and Children

- 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 (visit the BCCDC Priority Populations page for further details).

Please note that this document is an addition to our regular Preschool Policies outlined in the Preschool Handbook.

Please be aware that there may be changes to these policies as things change and new information becomes available. If it becomes necessary to amend the current policies, you will receive the updated version that will either replace or be added to the current pandemic version. Every parent will be asked to sign the Parent Declaration stating compliance with Inspiring Minds Preschool Policy.