COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for HELC

https://mn.gov/mmb/childcare/providers/

Department of Human Services child care provider hotline at 1-888-234-1268
https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.html

How COVID-19 spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets. When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although the virus cannot enter the body through the skin, the respiratory droplets carrying the virus can get into your airways or mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth to infect you. The virus can also be spread if you touch a surface contaminated with virus and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, although this is not the primary way the virus spreads.

Hopkins Early Learning Center (HELC) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our workers. To ensure that, we have developed the following Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Managers and workers are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces, and that requires full cooperation among workers and management. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of our workers and workplaces.

Management and workers are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this Preparedness Plan. HELC managers and supervisors have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy.

Our workers are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and keeping our workers working at HELC. Worker involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved HELC staff in this process by presenting them with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and using their knowledge and expertise on adopting these best practices to childcare practices to create a protocol.

Our Preparedness Plan follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines and federal OSHA standards related to COVID-19 and addresses:

- hygiene and respiratory etiquette;
- engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
- housekeeping – cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;
- prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- communications and training that will be provided to managers and workers; and
- management and supervision necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plan.
Screening and policies for employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Workers have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess workers’ health status prior to entering the workplace and for workers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms.

HEALTH SCREENING:

- We are also screening each staff member and child each morning asking temperature, if a cough is present, do they have shortness of breath, and do they have any of the following symptoms; chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell (if they have two of these symptoms, the child may not enter).
- If the answer is NO to cough and shortness of breath, and the child does not have a fever of 100.4 or over, they will be able to enter the building.
- Children and staff are also getting their temperature taken at meal times or at diapering times.
- The changes we have made to our regular day can be found here for staff https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nlx67OFitC8 and here for parents and children https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPnmB2kwK8M.

HOW WORKERS WILL COMMUNICATE WITH HELC IF THEY ARE SICK OR EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS WHILE AT HOME,

Staff must report that they are sick to the person responsible for staffing:

- Before 9:00 p.m. the night before, or
- Text anytime during the night before, or
- No later than one hour before your scheduled shift start time.

HOW WORKERS REPORT THEY ARE SICK OR EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS WHILE AT WORK

If at anytime an employee has a temperature of 100.4, any of the COVID 19 excludable symptoms or any other symptoms of any other excludable illness, they should report that to a supervisor immediately.

We are following the Minnesota Department of Health Guidelines for Exclusion (https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf)
WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER BECOMES ILL

When a student or staff member develops any symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) in a school or child care setting:

- Isolate the person in a separate room while they wait to be picked up or until they are able to leave the facility on their own. Ensure that they have hygiene supplies available, including a cloth mask, facial tissues, and alcohol-based hand rub.
- Remind staff who are monitoring the student or staff member with symptoms to practice social distancing when possible.
- Close off the space used for isolation after the ill person leaves. Open it after proper cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, focusing on areas where the person is known to have been and items they have touched (e.g., individual desk, cot, recently used toys, shared equipment).
- Wear gloves when cleaning, and wash hands after removing gloves.

WHEN A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER IS A SUSPECT OR POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

As long as routine cleaning and disinfection has been done regularly, additional cleaning and disinfection may not be necessary. Depending on when a person with COVID-19 was last in the facility, it may be difficult to know what areas they were in and what objects or surfaces they may have touched after they became sick.

Email the MDH School Team (at health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us) if you have questions about cleaning after a child or staff member becomes ill.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS FOR THE CLEANING STAFF AFTER AN ILL STUDENT HAS BEEN IN YOUR FACILITY

The risk of getting COVID-19 from cleaning is low. The following are general precautions for cleaning staff, given that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring:

- Staff should not touch their face while cleaning and only after they can wash hands after cleaning.
- Cleaning staff should wear uniforms (or designated work clothes) and disposable gloves when cleaning and handling trash. Cleaning staff should change clothes at the end of a shift. It may be helpful for them to keep a change of clothes at work.
- Clothing worn while cleaning should be placed in a plastic bag until it can be laundered. Laundering should be done as soon as possible and done safely at home.
- Cleaning staff should thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after gloves are removed.
- Staff who are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting should be trained to use disinfectants safely and effectively and to safely clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluids – blood, vomit, feces, and urine.
- All cleaning staff should be trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with OSHA’s Hazard Communication Standard 29 CFR 1910.1200.
HELC has implemented leave policies that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. HELC employees are able to take sick leave commensurate with their tenure at HELC if they are unable to work while at home. The sick leave policy has been extended to allow for use to care not only for employees themselves, but also family members who are sick and/or quarantined. Employees are also able to utilize the Family Medical Leave Act to supplement their sick time if necessary. Additional accommodations for workers with underlying medical conditions or who have household members with underlying health conditions have been implemented. Employees need only alert the HELC directors of their family member’s condition and desires in order to use sick time for those purposes.

HELC has also implemented a policy for informing workers if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. As soon as exposure is recognized by the directors, the affected staff will be quarantined. If staff finds out that they were exposed either at HELC or elsewhere, then must let the directors know within 24 hours in order for appropriate steps to be taken.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of workers’ health status and health information. In communications with other staff, parents, and elsewhere, HELC will not release any personal information regarding an affected staff member’s health condition or that of their family members.

**Handwashing**

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. Workers are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. All visitors to the facility will be required to wash their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the facility. Some workplaces may have hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) that can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled.

In accordance with the Center for Disease control (CDC) ([https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html# General](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html# General)) We are having children and staff wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water upon entering and leaving the building, before and after meals, after diapering or toileting, playing outside or in the gym, and after any sensory play. Hand sanitizer is located at the screening area, in the office, and in each classroom. Hand sanitizer should only be used if washing with soap and water is not readily available.

**Respiratory Etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

Workers and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing and to avoid touching their face, in particular their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. They should dispose of tissues in the trash and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and visitors. Following our normal protocol, we have signs from the Minnesota Department of Health ([https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/cycphceng.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/cycphceng.pdf)) in each classroom and throughout the building reminding students and staff to “Cover your Cough”. Children are also reminded by teachers to wash hands after coughing into their hands, sneezing, or using a tissue.
Social Distancing

Social distancing is being implemented in the workplace through the following engineering and administrative controls:

In accordance with the CDC guidelines (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#ScreenChildren)

- Children stay in the same groups daily when possible.
- Class sizes are no larger than 10 people in a classroom.
- Cots are to be placed 6 feet apart when possible during rest time if this is not possible, children will sleep head to toe in order to maintain distance.
- Outdoor and gym times will be staggered to limit contact with other groups.
- Workers are prohibited from gathering in groups and confined areas.

Housekeeping

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment, tools and machinery, and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, break rooms, lunch rooms and meeting rooms. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted in high-touch areas, such as phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc. HELC is following cleaning and disinfecting guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health (https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/clean.pdf)

GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff.

- Cleaning removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.
- Disinfecting kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Clean and disinfect at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:

- Door knobs and handles
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
- Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared desktops
- Shared computer keyboards and mice
- Shared toys
Note: Computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect the keys but enable use of the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.

ADDITIONALLY:

- Classroom teachers are responsible for the cleaning and disinfecting of their classrooms during operating hours.
- We are using the 3-Step process on toys and surfaces to disinfect using a bleach solution of 3 teaspoons of bleach per 24 ounces of water.
- Gym and outdoor equipment is also being disinfected between each use.
- Toys and equipment that are not easily disinfected or are communal (i.e. sandboxes, group sensory tables, cloth or plush toys) are not to be used or removed from the classroom at this time.
- Hopkins Public Schools is also cleaning and disinfecting the building and classrooms on a nightly basis.
- If a child or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19, it will trigger a 2–5 day closure to clean and disinfect the building.

Communications and Training

This Preparedness Plan was communicated by posting the policy in the building and sending emails to all staff with a link to the document on the HELC website, to all workers on May 4, 2020 and necessary training was provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing with the directors providing communication to staff about policy changes, procedure updates, and other relevant information and provided to all workers who did not receive the initial training. Managers and supervisors are to monitor how effective the program has been implemented by observing classrooms and staff, holding regular director meetings to discuss the procedures and implementation. Management and workers are to work through this new program together and update the training as necessary. This Preparedness Plan has been certified by HELC management and was posted throughout the workplace on May 4, 2020. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by: Jamie Bonczyk, MA Executive Director Hopkins Early Learning Center