



## COVID-19 PANDEMIC HEALTH & SAFETY HANDBOOK 2023-2024

*Updated August 24, 2023*

*The information in this handbook details specific guidelines in addition to our annual ELP Parent Handbook.*

Emmanuel Lutheran Preschool is licensed by the Virginia Department of Education and is an outreach of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Inc. We are committed to providing an outstanding early childhood education experience coupled with the highest standards to protect the health and safety of all students and staff in our care. During this continuing pandemic, our preschool has given considerable thought and planning to update our policies and ensuring the use of best practices as required and recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). **We appreciate our families' trust and partnership to keep our school open and safe for in-person learning.**

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) provides the following updated interim guidance for children, teachers, and staff in childcare. This revised guidance maintains that quarantine is no longer routinely recommended for asymptomatic individuals after exposure to COVID-19 infected individuals.

Click this link for the current **VDH** interim guidance on COVID-19- [Virginia Department of Health](#)

### COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy 2023-2024

Daily health observations are performed by our teachers for all children when they arrive at school. This is a visual inspection of the child to check for any concerns such as a cough, discharge from eyes, flushed skin, etc. Teachers are trained to recognize early signs of common illnesses and possible COVID-19 symptoms, and preventative measures to ward off any spread. They review training before the start of the school year on infection control including cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection. Best practices are followed to mitigate exposure and risk.

Parents/caregivers are responsible for completing the COVID-19 Waiver of Liability as part of registration. Currently, masks are optional for all students and staff. ELP will stay up to date with VDH and CDC guidelines on masking and community transmission rates.

If the preschool experiences a break-out of COVID-19 (defined as multiple cases within one classroom), ELP is required by law to notify the Fairfax County Health Department and strictly follow their instructions. Such directions may include disinfecting protocol, potential closure of a classroom, or even the building. Return to school guidelines will be included.

### Symptoms

Any child exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms during the day will need to be picked up from school immediately. Any person with a temperature above 100.4°F will not be allowed to remain at school. Individuals authorized as emergency contacts will be called if a parent can't be reached or is unable to retrieve their child within a reasonable timeframe.

- Your child should not attend school if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 exposure as listed:

Fever/Chills	Shortness of breath	Muscle/body aches	Loss of taste/smell	Nausea/vomiting
Cough/sore throat	Fatigue	Headache	Congestion/runny nose	Diarrhea

## Isolation and Quarantine Guidance

- **Symptomatic persons** (regardless of vaccination status) should begin isolation at home and undergo testing as recommended by their healthcare providers. The day symptoms began should be counted as day 0.
  - **Persons who test positive** (regardless of vaccination status) should isolate themselves at home for at least 5 days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours, they may return to programming after Day 5.
- **Masking** - If the individual is able to mask, they should do so through Day 10 OR
  - If the individual is unable or unwilling to mask during this time, these persons should either isolate for 10 full days, or follow the CDC “test-based strategy”, which now includes two negative antigen tests after 5 days of isolation, in addition to being fever-free for 24-hours and with other symptoms improving. The first test should be on day 6 or after, and the second test should be 24 hours after the first test.
  - **Symptoms** - If a child displays multiple COVID-19 symptoms, she/he will be required to stay at home for a minimum of five days. If they are asymptomatic or symptoms are resolving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours, they may return to programming after Day 5.
  - If a staff member becomes ill during the school day, a substitute will be called, and the staff member will immediately go home to self-isolate. If a child becomes ill during the day, they will be isolated and monitored by a staff member in a separate room that is set aside for that purpose and their parents will be notified for pickup.
  - If a child/staff member has a fever only, they will be required to stay at home until they are fever-free, without medication, for 24 hours. If a child has a diagnosis other than COVID-19, a physician may provide a letter of clearance to return to school.

## Exposure/Close Contact Guidance

For students/staff who have had a recent confirmed or suspected exposure to an infected person (regardless of vaccination status) quarantine is no longer recommended for early school age settings.

These individuals may continue to attend programming as long as they remain asymptomatic.

- **Masking** - students/staff that attend programming during the 10 days after exposure may choose to wear a mask around others indoors. The date of last exposure to the person with COVID-19 is considered Day 0.
- **Testing** – Students/staff who have had recent exposure may consider testing for COVID-19 five days after exposure (or sooner, if they’re symptomatic) regardless of their vaccination status.

## Travel

### Domestic Travel

The CDC currently recommends that all travelers arriving from travel inside the United States should:

- Get tested with a viral COVID-19 test if your travel involved situations with greater risk of exposure such as being in crowded places while not wearing a high-quality mask.
- Monitor your family for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow state guidelines or requirements after arrival.
- Further information from the CDC can be found at this link: [Domestic Travel](#)

### International Travel

The CDC currently recommends that all travelers arriving from travel outside the United States should:

- Get tested with a viral COVID-19 test 3-5 days after arrival.
- Monitor your family for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow state guidelines or requirements after arrival.
- Further information from the CDC can be found at this link: [International Travel](#)

## Reporting COVID-19 to the Preschool

Parents/caregivers must notify the ELP office immediately if their child tests positive for COVID-19 or if they are (or suspected) a close contact/exposure.

- Notify the School by: [Brightwheel](#) App OR phone: (703) 938- 6187

## Mask Requirements

Currently, masking is optional for all students and staff.

- Parents who decide to send their child in masks will need to place additional masks into the students tote bag. Extra masks (3 are recommended) should be stored in a paper or plastic bag identified with the child's name and will be kept inside their child's tote bag. Please replenish the mask supply as needed.
- Teachers will manage mask storage while outside and help students put their masks back on before returning indoors.

## COVID-19 Vaccine

Currently, the COVID-19 vaccine is optional for our students. We encourage parents to discuss the vaccine with their child's pediatrician.

## Handwashing/Cleaning Protocol

- All classroom floors, chairs, counters, and sinks will be cleaned, disinfected, as needed. Classroom tables will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each activity and snack time.
- Teachers and students are required to vigorously wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds upon entering the building and regularly throughout the day. Children will also wash their hands when moving from one activity area to another in their classroom, as well as after toileting, before and after snack, before and after outdoor activities, and before dismissal to go home.
- The bathrooms will be disinfected regularly per CDC guidelines.
- Common door handles will be wiped with disinfectant per CDC guidelines.
- In cases of toileting accidents or helping a sick child involves cleaning bodily fluids, teachers and staff will follow training protocols and have PPE available for these instances.
- All cleaning materials will be kept secure and out of reach of children.

## Classrooms/Choir Room/Fellowship Hall

- Air filtration units operate in each classroom and Choir Room.
- Windows are vented open to allow circulation while keeping the temperature in the classrooms at Virginia Department of Education Licensing Standards.

## Water/Snacks

We follow strict CDC and licensing guidelines for preparing, serving, and cleaning up after snack time. Water pitchers and disposable cups are available throughout the day rather than using a water fountain. Teachers and staff review training for proper food handling and sanitizing all surfaces before and after serving the daily school-provided snack and apple juice.

- Students who are masked remove their masks at snack time and replace them once they finish snack.